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ODE TO JOY

Every so often a book seems to pop out of nowhere and vault into the zeitgeist. And while in some cases that could have a dubious impact on popular culture (exhibit A: *Fifty Shades of Grey*), in other instances such literature might actually prove to be, well, good for us.

The book that seems to be approaching ubiquity these days is *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing*, by Marie Kondo. It's an instructional treatise on how to simplify your surroundings – and in turn, your life – through using the KonMari Method. With this system, you determine which items in your home "spark joy," and those are the things you retain.

As one who often succumbs to clutter, when Kondo's book made its way into my life – via my wife and various superiors at my workplace – I took it as a sign to literally "clean up my act," and while it took some effort, I am glad to have reconnected in some capacity with the things around me that actually help me feel good, and on the odd occasion, joyful.

Another way to connect with that conduit of inner electricity is, of course, through our passions – the things that serve as consistent sources of inspiration and wonder, and to some degree, sustain us as we amble through our day-to-day lives. I've often thought about running a piece in *realscreen* about the passions of select execs in this industry. As many of you know, Lifetime EVP and GM Rob Sharenow is also a published novelist, with two books under his belt. Eli Holzman, CEO of the Intellectual Property Corporation (IPC), created a frozen novelty treat, QBees, and is a founding and managing partner of NYC-based restaurant chain The Meatball Shop. And we all know that, perhaps unsurprisingly, Thom Beers has a thing for cars.

When you're able to combine your passions with the work you do, it is truly the best of both worlds. I was lucky to know Vinnie Kralyevich, an executive producer that many of you reading have worked with, and who, sadly, has passed on. Like you, I knew of his love of music, art, history, science... He also had the opportunity to indulge his passions through his work, with one example being a documentary about the rock 'n' roll pioneer Wanda Jackson, which he directed and produced with Joanne Fish. Jackson subsequently thanked them both when she was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Being part of his Facebook posse, I would also see the odd picture he'd snap from a shoot – a piece of art he was in awe of, an aeronautic gizmo that he found amazing. Even in his line of work, he could convey the sense of being a kid in a candy store.

Mulling all of this over, I think I've come to a new appreciation of this "joy" thing, and maybe it doesn't have to be as fleeting as some would have us think. Maybe, when we find it, we should do everything we can to tap into it, at home and at work. After all, we may, as some believe, have all the time we need in this life, but rarely do we get all the time we'd want.

Cheers,
Barry Walsh
Editor and content director
realscreen

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REVITALIZED REALITY

Is it just me or is anyone sensing a renewed energy and positive outlook for the unscripted industry? It's no secret that the past couple of years have been rather more subdued than the previous half a dozen, particularly in the reality space.

That "cooling off" has been attributed to a variety of factors ranging from copycat programming, to cast member controversies, to a more general shift in audience preferences towards drama. In 2014 some pundits went so far as to sound a death knell for the genre.

Fast-forward to 2016 when we've seen a number of announcements from various camps that seem to have reignited interest in reality across platforms, if *realscreen*'s Twitter feed is any indication. Netflix's *Ultimate Beastmaster*, which is exec produced by Sylvester Stallone and 25/7's Dave Broome will debut 10-episode orders in six territories simultaneously, each with their own versions. Now that is ambitious!

Also much buzzed about is *The Runner*, a production from Pilgrim Media Group, Adaptive Studios, and Ben Affleck and Matt Damon's prodco Pearl Street Films. A high-stakes entrant in the competition category premiering on Verizon's go90 video app, *The Runner* is a reincarnation of the series originally set to air on ABC in 2000, now developed to appeal to smartphone-toting, social media maven millennials.

Yes, these two shows happen to have big celebrity names attached, but anecdotally I'm hearing that there's a raft of smart, creative and original unscripted being shopped around and that there is a lot of business being done. Networks in attendance at the *Realscreen* Summit in January commented that the range of concepts they were hearing was more interesting and varied than in recent years. That bodes well, both for the production community and buyers.

Also encouraging was feedback from some of the delegations that were in attendance. Here's what Dawn McCarthy-Simpson, director of international development for the Producers Alliance for Cinema and Television (Pact), which represents UK indies, had to say about the most recent iteration of the Summit: "Realscreen is a must-attend event for British independent production companies. Over 70 companies attended in 2016 as part of the UK delegation, and 100% confirmed that they would be returning again next year. Pact would highly recommend it to any association helping companies generate new business through international partnerships."

So, as the team puts the finishing touches on the program for *Realscreen* West I am encouraged by what I am hearing and seeing first hand, and wish everyone that is converging on Santa Monica great success in their pursuits via the event.

'Til next time, go well
Claire Macdonald
VP & Publisher
realscreen

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In Memoriam

Realscreen remembers three members of the international non-fiction content community who have passed on.



Ralph C. Ellis

passed away at the age of 91 in late April.

The founder of Ellis Entertainment began his career with the National Film Board as a field rep in Halifax, and then in Toronto, Ottawa and New York. In 1955, he partnered with Paul Talbot and Saul Turell to open Fremantle of Canada, and then in 1964, set up a shop with partners Jerry Kedey and Dan Gibson, known as KEG Productions. Soon after, he established his own distribution business, Ralph C. Ellis Enterprises.

KEG would eventually morph into Ellis Vision after producing such ground-breaking doc series for television as *Audabon Wildlife Theatre*, which originally ran on the CBC from 1968-1974, and was syndicated into the U.S. market through Twentieth Century Fox; and *Profiles of Nature*, which aired in over 100 countries over a span of 20 years, and aired on Discovery Channel in its early days, making Ellis' company the first Canadian indie to score an output deal with Discovery, back in 1986.

Ellis, with son Stephen, also co-founded Outdoor Life Network Canada with Rogers and CTV in 1996. The Ellis duo sold its interest in OLN in 1998, a year after Ralph Ellis became a member of the Order of Canada.

Stephen Ellis had been overseeing the distribution side of the business since 1986 and was made president of KEG in the late 1990s.

In 2011 Ralph Ellis retired from the family business as chairman emeritus, and in 2015, was appointed chairman emeritus of Stephen Ellis' new company, Stellis Media, established to re-release some 600 titles in the genres of natural history, kids, history and science.

"I attribute his longevity to an early focus and orientation on international distribution, which became the engine pulling the production train; that and an extraordinary sense of humor that allowed him to see the lighter side of everything," said Stephen Ellis in a statement. **Barry Walsh**



William R. Grant

an Emmy- and Peabody Award-winning producer and founding board member of the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival, passed away at the age of 72 on May 15, of complications from pneumonia.

Grant had spent 28 years working in television after a nearly 20-year career as a newspaper reporter and editor in Kentucky, Michigan and California.

Over the course of his television career, he served as executive editor for PBS science strand 'NOVA' and managing editor of public affairs program 'Frontline'; executive director of science, natural history and features for New York City's WNET; and produced a number of critically acclaimed series for PBS, including *The American President* and *Stephen Hawking's Universe*.

He was the recipient of 13 Emmys and eight Peabody Awards.

In addition, Grant served as one of the founding board members behind the launch of the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival in 1991. He was named chairman of

the board in 2002 and served in that role for more than 10 years, and remained on the executive committee as chairman emeritus following his retirement.

"As one of the Jackson Hole founding board members, Bill's leadership and insight made a deep and enduring impact on the festival for more than two decades," read a statement from the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival. "His wisdom, clarity and wry humor will be deeply missed."

"Under Bill's leadership, the festival grew to become the most prestigious event of its genre," added Lisa Samford, executive director of the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival. "His impact was indelible and his leadership was very much a reflection of what he was as a human – insightful, wry, intelligent and always a true Southern gentleman." **Daniele Alcinii**



Vincent "Vinnie" Kralyevich

an Emmy Award-winning executive producer who was most recently a showrunner with Hit + Run Creative, died unexpectedly on May 9.

In addition to his work with Hit + Run, Kralyevich recently served as a writer on an upcoming episode of *Through the Wormhole with Morgan Freeman*, and executive produced *Secret Space Escapes* for ITV Studios America, which aired on Science in November. The 8 x 60-minute series recounted tales of close calls in space exploration, through first-person interviews with the astronauts and cosmonauts who survived them.

Kralyevich opened his own prodco, Kralyevich Productions Inc. (KPI) in November of 1992 and over the span of 19 years, grew its staff from three to 125 employees. Among the programs produced by the New York-based KPI were 2011's *Rising: Rebuilding Ground Zero* for Discovery (winner of a News and Documentary Emmy Award and a Realscreen Award); assorted series for History including *Deep Sea Detectives*, *Clash of the Gods* and *Engineering an Empire* (the latter also a winner of two Emmy Awards); *Flea Man*

and *Naked Science* for National Geographic Channel; and a project that spoke to one of his great passions, music – a profile of musician Wanda Jackson, *The Sweet Lady with the Nasty Voice*, for Smithsonian Channel, which Kralyevich produced and directed with Joanne Fish.

After KPI, Kralyevich formed Pipeline 39, which later morphed into Pulse3tv. Among that company's credits were two series for The Weather Channel – *Iron Men* and *Breaking Ice* – and the 4 x 60-minute *Mud Lovin' Rednecks* for Animal Planet.

"Vinnie had an enormous impact on a generation of non-fiction producers and editors – giving so many their first job in TV and sticking by them as he nurtured their talents and capabilities and then 'kicking them out of the nest,' inspiring them to do great things," offered Kristy Sabat, now an EP with Austin Street Productions, who, along with executive producer Bill Hunt and editor Jennifer Honn, had worked with Kralyevich for over 20 years. **BW**

A+E ramps up branded content with 45th & Dean

A+E Networks is launching a multi-platform content hub designed to function as a "full service agency for brands, shows, advertising and distribution partners" via the development and production of short and mid-form content. The storytelling hub and social media agency, named 45th & Dean, will be housed in a Brooklyn-based facility

opening in the fall, and will also have dedicated teams in A+E's Manhattan and Los Angeles offices. Paul Greenberg, executive vice president and general manager for A+E's FYI, will also take on the role of EVP for 45th & Dean.

Greenberg will report to Sean Cohan, president of international and digital media for A+E.

The company says the initiative will be focused on content creation, distribution, measurement and audience development for A+E Networks as well as for branded content partners. The team will publish strategically produced content daily, to be distributed to distinct audiences via specific platforms.

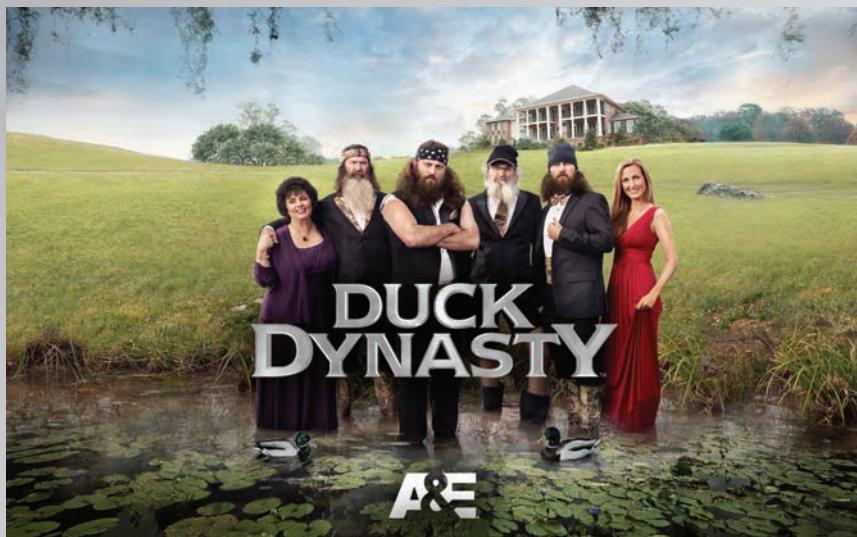
"A+E Networks is known for telling great stories via video across linear and non-linear platforms" said Cohan in a statement. "45th & Dean is an exciting new chapter for the development, distribution and sharing of new kinds of content to expand our reach, maximize audience engagement and drive value for our partners."

In building the team, A+E has brought on Shannon King as SVP, content partnerships and social media. Hailing from previous stints at Levo League, Time Inc., Yahoo! and AOL, King will oversee digital content partner relationships as well as social media teams across the A+E network portfolio.

Todd Pellegrino joins 45th & Dean as SVP of video content and will oversee all of the agency's short-form video content. He comes to the team from New Wave Entertainment, where he was a partner in its New York division. **BW**



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DISCOVERY CATCHES SPURLOCK'S RATS

Discovery Communications' flagship network has acquired the U.S. TV rights to Morgan Spurlock's forthcoming documentary on a city's "most unwanted inhabitants."

Titled *Rats*, the film, first announced in 2014, profiles the lives of New York City-dwelling rodents and is based on Robert Sullivan's critically acclaimed book *Rats: Observations on the History and Habitat of the City's Most Unwanted Inhabitants*.

Rats is produced by Spurlock's Warrior Poets in association with Discovery Channel, Dakota Group and Submarine, who represented the foreign rights to the film at this year's Cannes Film Festival.

Principal photography has already begun on the doc, which is expected to be completed by fourth quarter.

Spurlock serves as director and producer on the film alongside producer Jeremy Chilnick. Stanley Buchthal, David Koh, Josh Braun and Dan Braun are executive producers.

Rats will broadcast across Discovery in the U.S. later this year.

"Morgan and his team have found a community of critters very few people have covered: rats," commented John Hoffman, executive VP of documentaries and specials at Discovery Channel, Animal Planet and Science Channel, in a statement. "Their creative vision on this project is something not to be missed." DA



BEST PRACTICES: MANAGING WORKPLACE CONFLICTS

BY CHRIS PALMER AND SHANNON LAWRENCE

We all work hard to make sure that the workplace remains an amicable, professional, and conflict-free zone. However, it's impossible for the workplace atmosphere to be harmonious 100 percent of the time. In the work world – and anywhere – stress, heated emotions, and disagreements can occur. Though you cannot always prevent conflict in the workplace, it is essential to know how to manage it. Here are eight tips for minimizing conflict at work.

Be open and honest. When conflict arises, don't sweep it under the carpet. Unaddressed conflict or disagreements can fester and poison the workplace atmosphere. Bringing the conflict out into the open and being transparent about the issues that led to it are the first steps to resolution.

Don't cause a scene. Bring up issues of conflict in a discreet manner. Address individuals about conflicts privately, not in front of a group. You don't want to humiliate a colleague – or yourself – by making a conflict a public issue.

Don't gossip. If you have a problem with a co-worker, do not talk about it at work with colleagues who are not involved with the conflict. This is both unethical and detrimental to workplace morale.

Communicate. The best way to resolve conflict is through communication, preferably face-to-face conversation. Talking with a colleague about an issue in a professional manner means that both parties have the opportunity to express their position and, hopefully, find areas of understanding, or at least tolerant views that can lead to resolution. But if you must e-mail...

E-mail with a level head. Don't send out emails addressing work conflicts if you are in a foul mood or experiencing significant stress. Doing so is unlikely to help, and may

exacerbate problems. You will regret hitting the "send" button in the heat of emotion if you find that you have sent a message that is disrespectful or inappropriate in tone.

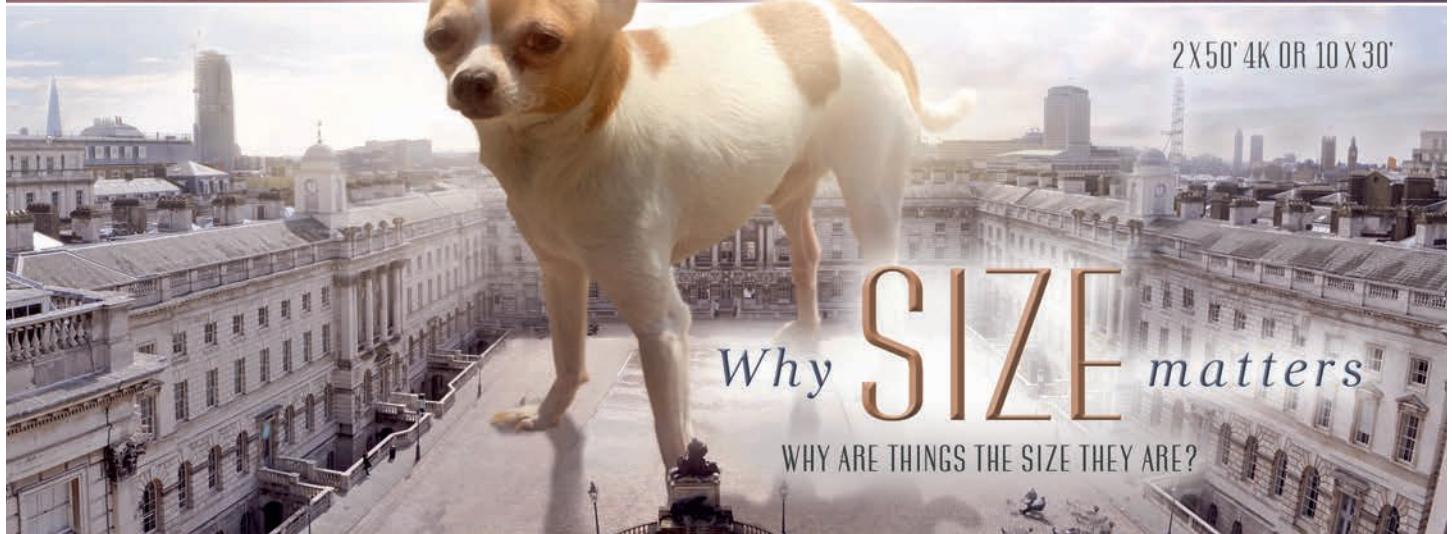
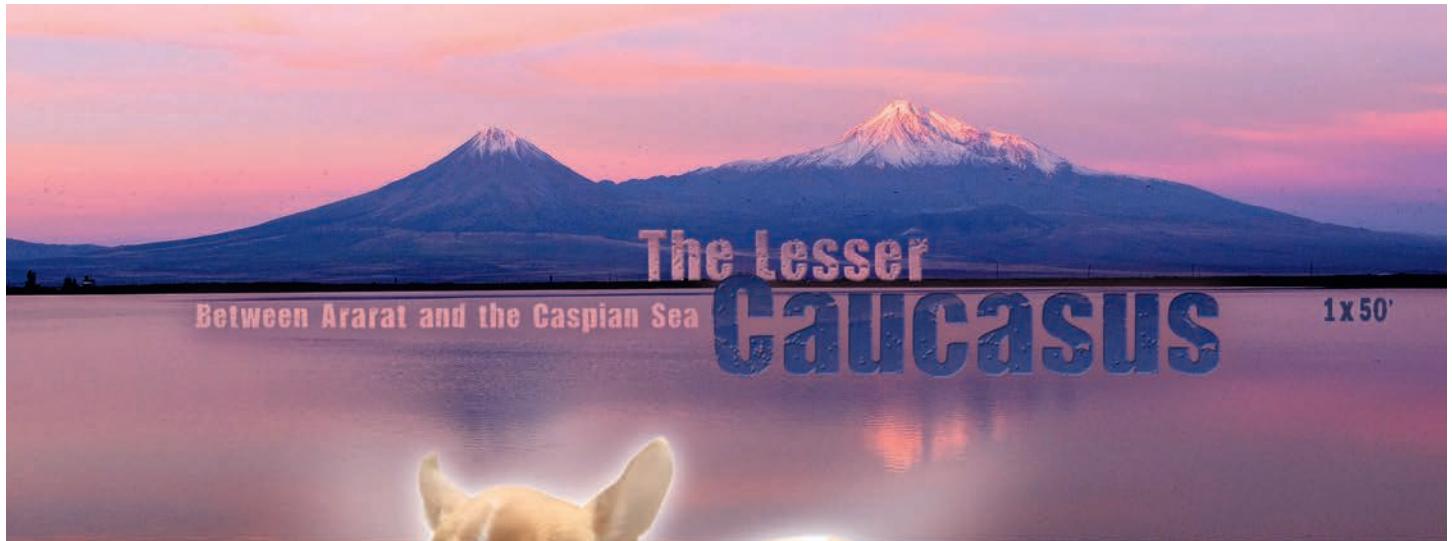
Be empathetic. When discussing a conflict with a colleague, try to see the issue from that person's side. While you may or may not agree with the colleague's perspective, understanding is key to resolution of differences.

Utilize workplace resources. Remember that professional and confidential assistance often is available through employers, whether from the human resources department or a specified individual. Don't be afraid to seek advice and help from these sources if you are having difficulty managing conflicts on your own.

Pick your battles. Every disagreement at work does not need to be a source of conflict. Avoid being combative over trifling problems at work. Choose instead to address those problems that threaten to harm work productivity or erode respect among colleagues.

While workplace conflict can be unpleasant, it is a regular component of professional life. Different work styles and dissenting opinions are almost guaranteed in a typical office or industry setting. Just because conflicts arise, though, does not mean that they necessarily will damage the mood in the office. Tackle conflicts quickly and move past them; by doing so you can protect the well-being of your professional community and work endeavor.

Professor Chris Palmer is director of American University's Center for Environmental Filmmaking and author of three books, including *Confessions of a Wildlife Filmmaker* and the newly published *Now What, Grad? Your Path to Success After College*. Shannon Lawrence is a filmmaker and MFA candidate at American University. •



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SLATE

Familiar faces fronting franchise spin-offs, new spins on tried and true genres, and yes, a little bit of Alaska, are all on the way from U.S. cable nets in the year ahead.

A+E NETWORKS

W

hile A+E Networks eschewed the idea of a glitzy upfront presentation this year, programming info for the group's portfolio emerged through the spring.

Scripted remains a priority for History, with docudrama *Barbarians Rising* from October Films set for June 6. On

the non-fiction front, *Ozzy and Jack's World Detour* will see Ozzy Osbourne and son Jack travel the world, covering a slew of spots with historical significance. The 10 x 60-minute series is from T Group Productions with Osbourne Media. and premieres on July 27.

History will venture into the crime space with a four-episode miniseries detailing the curious case of fugitive DB Cooper, who hijacked a plane in 1971, received a ransom of \$200,000 in cash and four parachutes, and then jumped off the plane and into hiding. LMNO produces, and *DB Cooper* premieres on July 10.

Big Easy Motors, from Glass Entertainment Group, follows New Orleans-based auto restoration expert Charles Handler as he restores vintage cars and preps them for auction. It premieres on July 5.

Peacock Productions, meanwhile, will be behind two one-off documentaries for the network this summer: *Alexander Hamilton* (w/t) and *The Rise and Fall of El Chapo*.

A&E, meanwhile, is looking at putting a new spin on the variety show format with the tentatively titled *50 Cent Presents* currently in development, with Back Roads Entertainment and the hip-hop star's G Unit Film and Television producing. Curtis "50 Cent" Jackson will host the series, which will feature sketches, stand-up, "reality experiments," music, magic, dance and celebrity guest appearances.

At FYI, the A+E Networks lifestyle net is adding to its relationship-themed programming with A. Smith & Co.'s *Teenage Newlyweds*, which follows three couples graduating from young sweethearts into husband and wife. The series makes its debut on May 31.

Returning series for the A+E roster include Leftfield Pictures' *Alone* for History, Lucky 8 Entertainment's *60 Days In* for A&E, and Moxie Pictures' *Arranged* for FYI. **Barry Walsh, Manori Ravindran**

ANIMAL PLANET

A

nimal Planet's 2016/2017 slate includes the documentary and blue-chip strand 'Animal Planet Presents.'

Films and specials set to premiere under the strand are the Slamdance doc winner *Million Dollar Duck*; *Life After Chernobyl*, about a biologist and anthropologist who risk

radiation exposure to investigate the impact of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster on animals in the surrounding area; and *I Bought A Rainforest*, about a wildlife cameraman who buys 100 acres of Amazon rainforest.

Natural history fare set to air on Animal Planet in the coming year includes *Life of Dogs* (w/t) from Plimsoll Productions, a multi-part blue chip series that looks at the history of dogs; and *Project Grizzly*, a six-part docuseries about a bear trainer who decides to reintroduce his two rescued grizzly bears to the wild after experiencing a crisis of conscience.

New unscripted series on the slate include the previously announced *Penn Vet* (w/t) from High Noon; the Houston-set series *Texas Vets* (w/t) from Glass Entertainment Group with Argyle Bargle Films; and *The Zoo* (w/t), the first series to receive access to the Bronx Zoo.

Animal Planet is also bringing back *Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet*; *Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet*; *Finding Bigfoot*; *Monsters Inside Me*; *My Cat From Hell*; *North Woods Law*; *Pit Bulls & Parolees*; *River Monsters*; *Rugged Justice*; *Tanked* and *Treehouse Masters*. **Kevin Ritchie**



Part of the team behind *Penn Vet* (w/t), coming to Animal Planet.

BRAVO

NBCUniversal-owned cable net Bravo Media has bolstered its line-up with six unscripted series from the likes of World of Wonder Productions, Most Talkative Productions and Evolution Media.

The tentatively titled *Relative Success* with *Tabatha Coffey* from Lime Pictures and All3Media America features the Australian salon owner and star of such series as *Tabatha's Salon Takeover* (pictured) as she helps family-owned businesses through turbulent times by separating business affairs from relationships and doling out "no-nonsense tough love" to right the ship. Greg Lipstone, Kate Little, Derek McLean, Phil Harris and Paul Osborne serve as executive producers on the series.

JV Productions' *Yours, Mine or Ours* features real estate agent Reza Farahan and interior designer Taylor Spellman competing to convince couples ready to transition into cohabitation to either keep their Spellman-redesigned home, or relocate to a new property to call their own. Executive producers include Courtney Campbell, Kirk Hipkiss and Ryan Seacrest.

Meanwhile, World of Wonder Productions and Most Talkative Productions are behind the nostalgic series *Then & Now with Andy Cohen*, which will find the TV host and an informed panel of pop culture contributors examining a defining year in recent history and dissecting the biggest news stories, pop culture moments and trends. The program previously aired as a three-part series on Bravo in December. Fenton Bailey, Randy Barbato, Tom Campbell and Andy Cohen are the executive producers.

Summer House (working title) from Left Hook Media and True Entertainment will follow a group of friends living the high-end lifestyle as they spend their weekends partying at one of the most exclusive beach areas on the East Coast.



Tabatha Coffey will feature in a Bravo series about family-run businesses.

Left Hook's Matt Odgers and Scott Teti serve as executive producers alongside *True's* Steven Weinstock, Glenda Hersh, Lauren Eskelin, and Noah Samton. Sean Clifford also serves as executive producer.

Elsewhere, Evolution Media's half-hour reality series *Oklahoma City* (w/t) will shadow a set of women challenging the conventions of conservative society by showing an alternative side to the locale. Douglas Ross and Alex Baskin serve as EPs alongside Brian McCarthy.

Finally, *The Lodge* (w/t) from Tricon Films & Television shadows the working lodge staff at an "ultra-luxurious" Whistler-area ski resort. The series will follow lodge employees as they cater to the whims of the wealthy vacationing clientele, from heli-skiing adventures to white water rafting and dining at exclusive restaurants, while navigating resort hierarchy and the romantic interests of colleagues. Executive producers are Andrea Gorfolova, Jameel Bharmal, Jeff Hevert and Bruce Toms. **Danielle Alcini**

DISCOVERY CHANNEL

Discovery Channel's slate for the 2016/2017 season includes the doc series *Cooper's Treasure* and survivalist series *The Wheel* from Pilgrim Media Group, along with Original Productions' previously announced *Deadliest Catch* spin-off, *Deadliest*

Catch: Dungeon Cove, and a new auto show titled *Sacred Steel*.

Cooper's Treasure, produced by Ample, follows treasure hunter Darrell Miklos as he attempts to decode a map drawn by longtime friend and astronaut Gordon Cooper, created out of discoveries he made while circling the Earth on a 122-hour mission, which might point the way to findings of untold riches.

Produced by Half Yard Productions, *Sacred Steel* joins the net's 'Motor Mondays' line-up and takes viewers inside the Douche LaRouche motorcycle shop, which makes custom fabricated high-end choppers and restores American classics.

The net's previously announced scripted forays include *Harley and the Davidsons* and the anthology series *Manifesto*, while special programming will see the return of *Shark Week* as well as *Elevation Weekend*.

Returning series on the net include *Alaskan Bush People* (Park Slope Productions), *Alaska: The Last Frontier* (Discovery Studios), *Bering Sea Gold* and *Deadliest Catch* (Original Productions), *Diesel Brothers* (Magilla Entertainment), *Fast N' Loud* (Pilgrim Media Group), *Gold Rush* (Raw Television), *Killing Fields* (Sirens Media), *Misfit Garage* (Pilgrim Media Group), *Naked and Afraid* and *Naked and Afraid XL* (Renegade 83), *Street Outlaws* and *Street Outlaws: New Orleans* (Pilgrim Media Group) and *Treasure Quest* (MAK Pictures).

Meanwhile, Discovery Channel's commitment to documentary continues via its 'Discovery Impact' strand, which will feature three environmental-themed docs over the course of the year. They include *Sonic Sea* from Michelle Dougherty and Daniel Hinerfield, which aired in May; *Toucan Nation* from Paula Heredia, set for July 30; and water crisis doc *Drought* (working title) from Rob Epstein, Jeffrey Friedman, Barbara Kopple, Alan and Susan Raymond, and Jesse Moss, currently slated for August 4. **MR, BW**



Musician and environmentalist Sting appears in the 'Discovery Impact' doc *Sonic Sea*.

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FOOD NETWORK

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crips Networks Interactive's Food Network has several new series slated for the remainder of 2016, ranging from franchise extensions to cooking competitions for the young and old.

Spin-offs of existing Food Network series include *Cutthroat Kitchen: Time Warp Tournament*, in which chefs take on each other as well as cuisine styles from decades past. It premieres in June and is produced by Embassy Row. *Guy's Grocery Games: All-Star Lockdown* starring Guy Fieri, meanwhile, makes its debut in August and is produced by Triage Entertainment and another edition, *Guy's Grocery Games: Impossible*, airs in December; and the *Food Network Star* franchise gets a *Kids* edition come August, produced by Triage Entertainment.

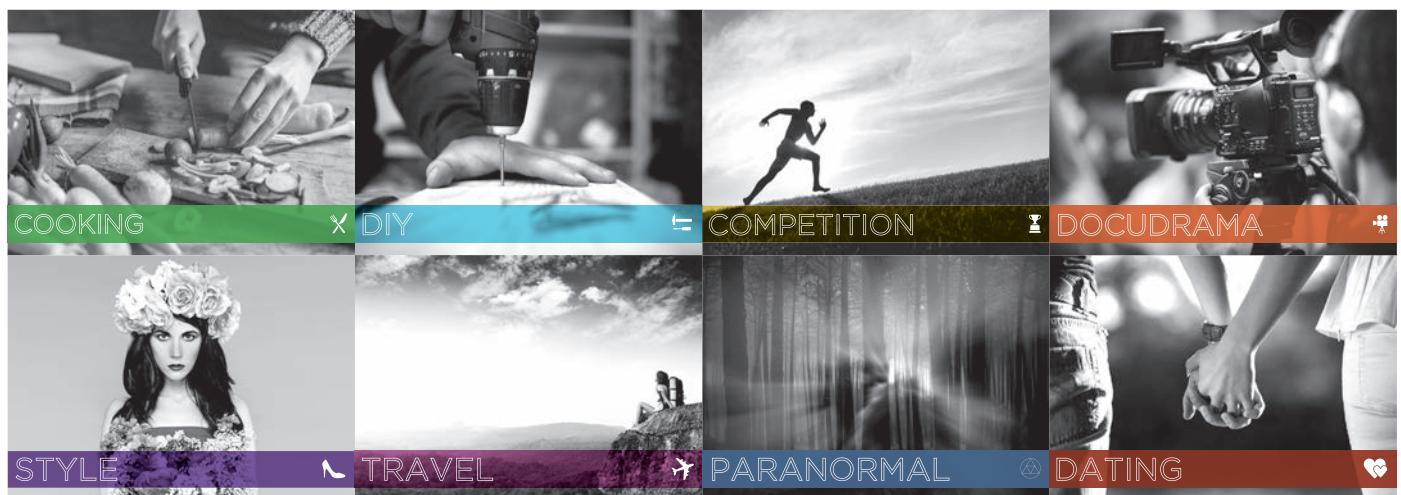
Online food critics go undercover to give struggling restaurants a helping hand in *12 Hungry Yelpers*, from ITV Studios America and premiering in July. Meanwhile, spawned from the success of its *Worst Cooks in America*, Optomen Productions brings *Worst Bakers in America* to Food Network in October.

Elsewhere, Grandma's home cooking takes center stage in *Clash of the Grandmas*, in which four grandmothers square off for a US\$10,000 prize. Triage produces. **BW**

022



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PREMIUM QUALITY SERVED UP FOR REALITY AND MORE

HGTV

Upcoming titles for the Scripps-owned net include *Home Town* (TBD), featuring a Mississippi couple renovating historic homes; and *Vintage Flip*, which bows June 2, and showcases an Orange County duo as they renovate vintage homes with updated features.

HGTV's fantasy destination programming receives a new entry with *Mountain Life* (TBD), showcasing homebuyers in search of properties near mountainous ranges across the U.S.

Remaining series on HGTV's roster include *The Monica Potter Project* (w/t; August), featuring the actor and her sister as they buy and restore their childhood home in Cleveland, Ohio; *We Bought the Farm* which premiered in April and highlights families in search of spacious luxury farmhouses; four-part spin-off *Flip or Flop Selling Summer* (August), tracing Tarek and Christina El Moussa as they transform dated backyards into useable outdoor spaces; and *The Gabrielle Union and Dwayne Wade Project* (TBD). Returning series include *Good Bones* and *Brother vs. Brother*. DA



Good Bones returns for a second season early in 2017.

023

TGROUP

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INVESTIGATION DISCOVERY

Investigation Discovery's 2016/2017 slate of 13 new and original series includes the 10-part series, *People Magazine Investigates*, produced by Radley Studios and People Productions; and the six-part series *Hard Evidence: O.J. is Innocent* from Objective Media and All3Media America.

The Vanishing Women from Sirens Media will unearth the circumstances around the disappearance of six young women in Chillicothe, Ohio, while exploring the facts that seemingly brought them to their tragic fate. The six-part docuseries is scheduled to premiere on June 6.

The net has also ordered two series with Louisiana serving as a backdrop, including Jupiter Entertainment's *Murder Chose Me*, which will follow Rodney Demery (pictured), a homicide detective with a personal connection to crime as he solves a murder case in Shreveport; and Cineflix Productions' *The Detectives Club: New Orleans*, profiling a group of retired New Orleans detectives as they discuss high-profile cases throughout the 1990s and 2000s. Meanwhile, the tentatively titled

I, Witness from XCon Productions and Lincoln Square Productions will follow real-life murder investigations through the eyes of a single individual; *Married With Secrets* (w/t) from Intuitive Entertainment will reveal the dark secrets buried within seemingly happy marriages; and *Pandora's Box: Unleashing Evil* from Sharp Entertainment will unearth crime scene investigations that become more sordid with each piece of evidence.

The network will also trot out Crazy Legs Productions' *Dead Silent*, which details crimes from isolated locales; Red Marble Media's *Grave Secrets*, in which the closely guarded secrets of the deceased are revealed; and Jupiter Entertainment's *Murder Calls*, which uncovers the stories of murders through 911 emergency calls.

Rounding out Investigation Discovery's 2016/2017 programming schedule are the Indigo Films-made *We Did It for Love* (w/t), examining couples who commit crimes; Sirens Media's *Jane Doe Diaries* (w/t), tracing the detectives and families behind cases with unidentified victims; and finally, Lion Television's *The Deadliest Decade* (w/t), recounting '80s murder investigations. **DA**

MTV



fter years of skewing away from music-focused programming with the likes of *The Real World*, *Teen Mom*, *Jersey Shore* and *The Hills*, the Viacom-owned network has greenlit its first weekly live music performance series in nearly 20 years.

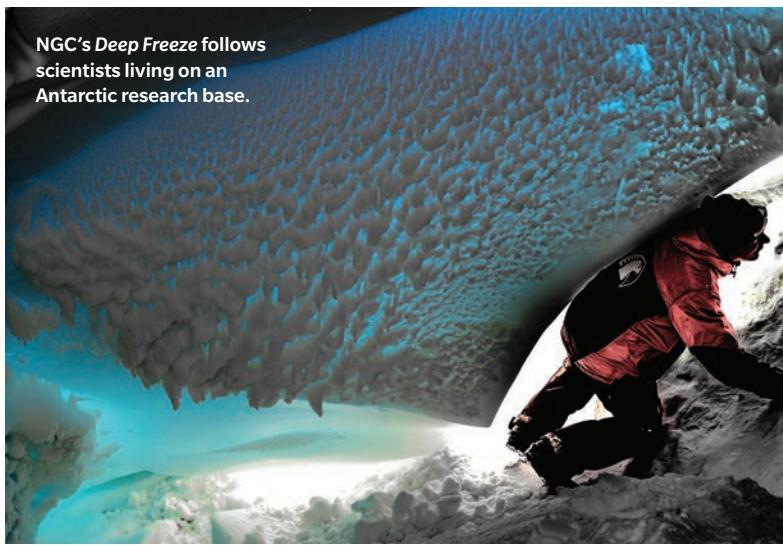
The tentatively titled *Wonderland*, which is expected to premiere this fall, will be an LA-based series featuring live performances from three different musical and comedic acts. The hour-long series was co-developed with Comedy Central and is exec produced by Done & Dusted with MTV.

Additional music-inspired series to be greenlit by MTV include a revamped version of *MTV Unplugged*, in which musicians will take to an intimate stage with acoustic instruments and their voices; an as-yet untitled music competition from executive producer Mark Burnett and MGM Television, in which budding hip-hop artists compete for a record label deal in the recording studio; and dance docuseries *Going Off* (w/t; from Radical Media), in which one dancer will win a high stakes opportunity to book a professional gig at the end of each episode.

The network has also secured development deals with Scooter Braun Films to produce *Studio 24*, in which famous artists and mystery talents are paired to create a new song over a 24-hour period; and *Year One*, an archive-based music docuseries that will explore the breakthrough year in a musician's career.

Meanwhile, traditional reality docuseries and game shows will also be front and center on the network's forthcoming slate, with new programming that includes docuseries *The Outsiders* (w/t; Barcroft Media), focused on eight families on the fringes of society; entrepreneurial docuseries *Shonesty* (w/t; Critical Content), on the upstart millennial fashion brand; and serialized docuseries MTV's *The Investigation* (w/t; Embassy Row), following Ryan Ferguson, who spent 10 years wrongly imprisoned, as he probes cases of the wrongfully convicted.

Tollbooth TV's reality competition series *Stranded with a Million Bucks* will document contestants with drone technology as they endure life on a remote island with a suitcase filled with one million dollars, while the competition format *The Almost Impossible Game Show* from Endemol Shine Group will see contestants battling through physical challenges ranging from the absurd to the outlandish to win cash prizes. The game show is based on ITV2's popular UK format by the same name. **DA**



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL

Leading NGC's slate is *Earth Live!*, a global event produced by Bumim/Murray Productions and Berman Productions that will broadcast wildlife footage live from all seven continents using an array of tech, including full-color night vision cameras, high-definition cameras in space and Nat Geo's Crittercam.

Brain Games host Jason Silva will feature in *Origins*, about human evolution. Produced by Asylum Entertainment and online video producer melodysheep, the series looks at pivotal moments in human history by moving backwards in time.

Limited series include National Geographic Studios' *Chain of Command*, an inside look at the U.S. military mission in Afghanistan over the course of a year; the Wall to Wall Media-produced *Lawless Oceans* with Karsten von Hoesslin, about the world of law enforcement in international waters; and the National Geographic Studios-produced *Deep Freeze*, following scientists living on an Antarctic research base.

The network also announced that Mexican filmmaker Everardo Gout

(*Days of Grace*) will direct the previously announced documentary-scripted hybrid series *Mars*, from Ron Howard's Imagine Entertainment and Radical Media.

Other previously announced projects on the slate include Alex Gibney's miniseries *Parched*, about the looming global water crisis; the untitled Sebastian Junger-helmed doc on the war in Syria; Brett Morgan's Jane Goodall doc and the Simon Chinn-exec produced doc on the Los Angeles riots.

After re-launching the strand last fall, Nat Geo will further reboot *Explorer* as a talk show this fall.

The doc strand is now a one-hour weekly magazine-talk hybrid series anchored in a studio in front of a live audience by host Richard Bacon. The show will mix field packages and interviews with celebrities with experts and correspondents discussing topics such as climate change, natural disasters and the ongoing war with ISIS.

Nat Geo has also renewed the climate change-focused doc series *Years of Living Dangerously* (*The Years Project*) for a second season and Neil deGrasse Tyson's talk show *StarTalk* for a third season. Both will premiere in the fall. **KR**

NAT GEO WILD

Slated to premiere in 2017, the Blast! Films-made *Project Puppy* will shadow six new pet parents from across the country during the first 12 weeks of dog ownership, with each episode chronicling the different stages of discovery, discipline and patience as both family and puppy learn to live together.

Propagate Content's *Animal ER* will follow staff at the Gulf Coast Veterinary Specialists (GCVS) in Texas as they use cutting-edge technology to diagnose and treat a roster of patients including chimps, giant pythons, bighorn sheep, seals, rams and exotic birds.

Safari Brothers from Symbio Studios will trace the expeditions of brothers Brant and Grant Reed across Botswana's Okavango Delta as they manage one of the region's most successful safari companies.

Meanwhile, Leepson Bounds Entertainment will produce a weekly primetime talk show devoted to pets called *Pet Talk*. The series will be hosted by two veterinarians, a wildlife expert and a field reporter as they provide the latest pet-related news, advice and personal stories.

Nat Geo Wild has also ordered the miniseries event *Savage Kingdom* from Icon Films in association with Natural History Film Unit Botswana. The docuseries, which is scheduled to broadcast later this year, will focus on the predatory animals roaming the Savute, a 40-square-mile corner of the African savanna, as they hunt such prey as elephant, buffalo and zebra in order to survive.

Other specials set to air over the next year are the seventh annual *Big Cat Week*, focused on saving big cats in the wild; the third annual *BarkFest*, a special weekend dedicated to dogs; and *SharkFest*, a week-long event with in-depth profiles of various shark species.

Returning to the network are *The Incredible Dr. Pol* (National Geographic Television); *Dr. Oakley, Yukon Vet* (Lucky Dog Films); *Dr. K's Exotic Animal ER* (Spectrum Field Productions); and *Cesar 911* (Leepson Bounds Entertainment). **DA**



TLC

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LC is making its first foray into scripted and reintroducing home and property-related programming in 2016/2017.

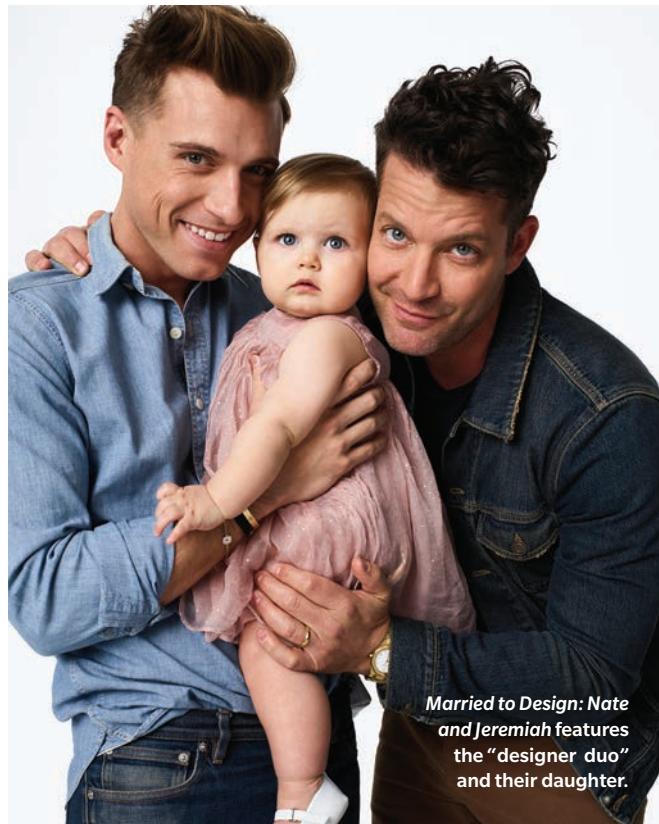
The Discovery Communications lifestyle network is leading its unscripted slate with a trio of home-centric series: the Asylum Entertainment-produced reno series *Married to Design: Nate & Jeremiah* (w/t), featuring design couple Nate Berkus and Jeremiah Brent; the High Noon Entertainment-produced *Project Playhouse* (w/t), about a family-run playhouse design business; and the Paper Route-produced *Hidden Money Makeover* (w/t), a dream makeover series.

The cable network has also okayed its first scripted series, the eight-episode political drama *Too Close To Home* (w/t) from Tyler Perry Studios.

TLC has also greenlit *Meet the Putmans* (w/t) from Discovery Studios/Mystic Art Pictures, about a family of 25 that live under the same roof; *Ink Ink Shop* (w/t) from Big Fish Entertainment, about a women-run tattoo parlour in Springfield, Montana; and the *90 Day Fiancé* spin-off *90 Day Fiancé: After the 90 Days* (w/t) from Sharp Entertainment.

Previously announced series on the slate are *Sweet 15: Quinceañera* from High Noon and the parenting series *Outdaughtered* from Boardwalk Entertainment Group.

Returning series include *Sister Wives*, *My Big Fat Fabulous Life*, *The Little Couple*, *Long Island Medium* and *90 Day Fiancé*. In 2017, TLC bridal reality staple *Say Yes to the Dress* will mark its 10th year on the air. **KR**



TRAVEL CHANNEL

June, Travel Channel will premiere adventure series *Dartboard Road Trip*, which shadows actor Brian Unger as he travels across the U.S. to experience the country's roadside attractions; *7 Water Wonders*, which travels the globe to uncover some of the most extravagant poolside amenities and aquatic designs; and *Top Secret Swimming Holes*, which ventures to off-the-grid locales to expose natural and exotic bodies of water.

The Queen Latifah-fronted series *The Best Place to Be* (July) will provide viewers with an exclusive look at A-list celebrity getaways, while *Celebrity Adventure Club* (August) will trace actors as they explore a variety of topics including space exploration and the rebirth of Detroit.

Elsewhere, culinary travelog Andrew Zimmern's *Driven by Food* is slated to offer a locals-only experience by following various taxi drivers this August.

Finally, the net has slated July launches for such travel series as *Island Explorers* (w/t), following adventurous hosts as they discover the best sightseeing spots on various islands; and *Life's a Beach*, which features stories and tips from individuals who pursue a beach lifestyle.

Returning series include *Expedition Unknown*, with Josh Gates. **DA** •



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Little Big Shows

BY DANIELE ALCINII



Kid-focused unscripted programming is all the rage in the U.S., with established franchises adding “junior” editions, and family-friendly formats warming hearts and winning audiences.

Earlier this year, China’s state-run agency responsible for the supervision of state-owned enterprises engaged in the television, radio and film industries ruled that children – particularly children of celebrities – would be banned from appearing on Chinese reality television.

The guidelines issued by the State Administration for Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) appear to have been put in place as a way to shield children from the vulnerabilities of “overnight fame.” Implemented in April, the new regulations will look to quell the broadcast of popular non-fiction series featuring famous entertainers and their children – a genre that has become increasingly popular with Chinese viewers in recent years.

The sanctions fly in the face of a growing North American trend that has seen kid-centric reality formats blossom into a booming television market in the U.S. With Fox’s *MasterChef Junior*

riding a ratings wave since its September 2013 debut – it recently averaged 4.12 million viewers in its fourth season – other networks have carved out a space for themselves in the niche market.

NBC made big noise when it sneak-previewed *Little Big Shots*, a child-focused talent/variety show with *The Voice* as its lead-in, and wound up with the biggest broadcast premiere or preview of an unscripted series since *The X Factor* on Fox in 2011. Hosted by Steve Harvey and produced by Warner Horizon Television, East 112 Street Productions and Ellen DeGeneres’ A Very Good Production shingle, the series was renewed for a second season after two episodes.

Viacom-owned channel Spike and sister network Nickelodeon are preparing the hour-long stunt *Lip Sync Battle Jr.*, with Fox moving further into the genre with *So You Think You Can Dance: The Next Generation* – the junior edition of the dancing competition – in late May. Meanwhile, FYI’s culinary competition series *Man vs. Child:*

Project Runway Junior is going after core *Runway* fans, but with a younger cast.

Chef Showdown, in which talented young cooks face off against professionally trained chefs, returned with its second season in March.

For Robin Ashbrook, showrunner and exec producer of the *MasterChef* franchise and *Little Big Shots*, there are two reasons behind the surge of kids reality programming. The most evident, he says, is the current lack of feel-good series in North America that allow for family appointment and co-viewing opportunities around the television. And buffeting the boom of miniaturized adaptations and original formats are copycat series.

“A lot of the thought is that there’s some kind of chemistry and simple magic of putting kids on TV – that you can put them on any crap format and it will be great, which is not the case,” he tells *realscreen*.

What does work, according to Ashbrook, is when networks and studios manage to unearth a great format coupled with a great host first. Only then should the children themselves be introduced to the camera and afforded a stage on which to shine.



"Everything is real," says the showrunner of *MasterChef Junior* regarding having kids in the kitchen.

"The emotional side of it is usually important to me," Ashbrook notes. "We never eliminate kids individually and we always avoid the word 'eliminate.' We try to not [call them] 'pressure and elimination challenges,' so the vocabulary is different within the show and with that comes a different spirit."

The feel-good approach has worked with *MasterChef Junior* and again with *Little Big Shots*, which grabbed an average of 12.3 million viewers over its first season.

While producers and broadcasters alike must take care to ensure children aren't demoralized, for a franchise's kid-focused spin-off to succeed, challenges should not be overly simplified.

It's a practice that A+E Networks-owned channel Lifetime has managed to exploit through its *Project Runway* franchise after having stumbled with *Project Runway: Threads*, the self-contained fashion competition featuring teenagers.

"As part of that format, the children worked with their parents to design and execute the clothes," said Eli Lehrer, then senior VP, head of non-fiction programming at Lifetime (now heading up MTV2). "I think we quickly realized that a large part of the appeal of these kinds of kids shows was diluted when they had adult partners."

With *Project Runway: Junior*, which launched with a 0.34 rating (P18-49) and has been

renewed for a sophomore season, Lifetime made the "very conscious decision" to duplicate the unadulterated *Runway* format by treating children like adults, giving them the same challenges and creative constraints.

"We didn't want people to watch it and think this is a show for kids," Lehrer says. "We love that it's resonated with kids, but we wanted the core *Runway* fan to watch it and think that the fashion being executed was on par with what you see on *Runway* – a seamless transition."

Food Network marked its latest foray into the genre on May 23 with the launch of *Kids BBQ Championship*. The cooking competition is the latest in a series of shows aimed at unearthing prodigies in the kitchen, with last year's *Kids Baking Championship* delivering the network's highest-rated Monday 8 p.m. hour ever while also capturing nearly 30% of the A25-54 audience.

Later this year, the Scripps Networks Interactive-owned channel will feature some of the network's brightest young stars in a *Food Network Star* spin-off junior edition.

"Our first reaction to the [*Kids BBQ Championship*] idea was to wonder whether [having] kids grilling was even safe, but then we saw some of these kids in action," said Didi O'Hearn, senior VP of programming and development at Food Network and Cooking Channel. "It was clear they knew what they were doing and had the skill and passion to compete in what was previously considered an adult world."

That's the fundamental challenge that differentiates producing children-focused reality from traditional unscripted shows.

While child labor laws vary from state to state, California's regulations are seen as the industry barometer. The Golden State has laid out clear guidelines specifying the amount of hours a child star can work, the educational prerequisites that need to be provided through on-set teachers, and ensuring that 15% of the child's gross earnings are placed into a trust.

"There's a perception that if you shoot outside of the school year in the summer you can do what you'd like; that's actually not the case," Ashbrook explains. "There are working guidelines and restrictions of how long you can work the kids, and rightly so."

"We'll spend 10 hours with the adults and five hours with the kids," Ashbrook continued with regards to *MasterChef Junior*. "It's great to go, 'We've got to do all of this in five hours.' There's no overtime, there's no 'We'll just take another 40 minutes' like there might be with any other TV show – you get the show done within five hours and that's it. You do what you can."

From a health and safety standpoint, if there are two medics in the kitchen for *MasterChef* proper, the ratio for the miniature edition sees one medic to every two children.

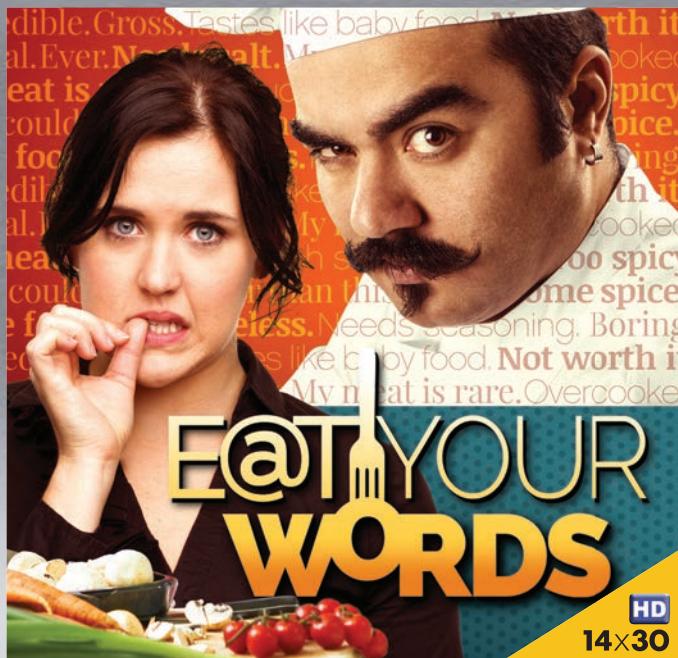
"We don't give them rubber knives, they don't work with pretend fire – everything is real, and so it should be because they're working in a kitchen," Ashbrook maintains.

"You have to be very cognizant that you're not setting these kids up for failure or disappointing the viewer," says Lehrer, "and so you just have to be very judicious in your casting so that you're really finding kids that perform at an exceptional level."

"A lot of the thought is that there's some kind of simple magic of putting kids on TV."



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TAKING THE LEAP

BY BARRY WALSH



Pilgian



Taylor

Competition formats are increasingly finding homes on emerging platforms, with big players from traditional TV striking deals with the new buyers on the scene. Will the genre be revitalized by its move to the digital domain?

Much like the participants who will ultimately be competing in the series when it launches this summer, *The Runner* has traveled a circuitous route to arrive at its destination.

The series sees a “runner” travel across the United States and try to evade capture over a month-long period, while viewers try to pinpoint his or her

whereabouts and ultimately track the contestant down for a cash prize. Originally picked up by American broadcast net ABC at the turn of the millennium, the series was pulled following the events of September 11, with safety concerns for the participants cited as a key issue. It then followed ABC exec Lloyd Braun to Yahoo! in 2006, but languished in development.

Now, via Verizon’s nascent mobile content platform go90 and the production trifecta of Pilgrim Media Group, Adaptive Studios, and Matt Damon and Ben Affleck’s Pearl Street Films, *The Runner* is back on track. According to Pilgrim president and CEO Craig Piligian, who was involved in the initial iteration of the show back

in 2000, it has found its rightful home after 16 years.

“Technology finally caught up to the format,” he maintains. “Now, with the technology behind smartphones, you can literally take a time-stamped picture and that’s how you catch *The Runner*.

“Because of crowdsourcing, and using real-time clues, you can be in your armchair in Atlanta, or in your basement on the computer, and you can play the game on a national platform,” he adds. “Think of the United States of America as a Monopoly board, and you’re playing this game every day for 30 days, with America playing along.”

Indeed, while several television competition and game formats have sought ways to successfully integrate what was once known as “the second screen” into the game play, the big, bold forays into the space by newer

platforms such as go90 point to a burgeoning “mobile first” movement for unscripted competition.

“We’re starting to see the TV distribution model replicated to some degree by carriers, and I think that’s going to be a trend,” says Amanda Taylor, co-founder of dance-focused, multi-platform netDanceOn, which is behind such competition series as *Dance Off Junior* and *Every Little Step*, exec produced by Nigel Lythgoe.

“AT&T and Verizon are certainly way ahead of the game in what they’ve done with content and platform development,” she says. “There are a lot of new players.”

Just before press time, Netflix became one of those new players via its first greenlit global competition series, *The Ultimate Beastmaster* from Sylvester Stallone and unscripted veteran Dave Broome. Increasingly, non-linear platforms are using the know-how of prodcos and showrunners from the television world to bring broadcast-quality production values to their properties.

Pilgian doesn’t give an exact figure for *The Runner’s* budget but says, “We’re very happy with what we have to do this project with.” Taylor, who has also worked with such unscripted TV powerhouses as Bumim/Murray, admits that it’s necessary to “stretch the digital dollar” to give competition formats the look and feel that viewers expect from years of viewing top TV series such as *So You Think You Can Dance?* But while broadcast-sized budgets may not be available for every non-linear series, Taylor says, “In unscripted and scripted [projects] you find that you can have comparable budgets to what you’d see in cable. That’s not for every platform, but it does exist.”

With *The Runner* slated to launch on July 1 via go90 and run for 30 days following, it’s still unknown as to whether the series will resonate with the connected millennial audience Verizon is in hot pursuit of. But odds are other platforms will still venture into the competition space, even if on a smaller scale.

“I know that, because it’s a big swing, a lot of companies will be looking to see how well we perform,” says Pilgian of *The Runner’s* upcoming sprint into the homes, or phones, of America. “We’re hoping that, because we’re on the vanguard of this new frontier, we will burst the door wide open.”



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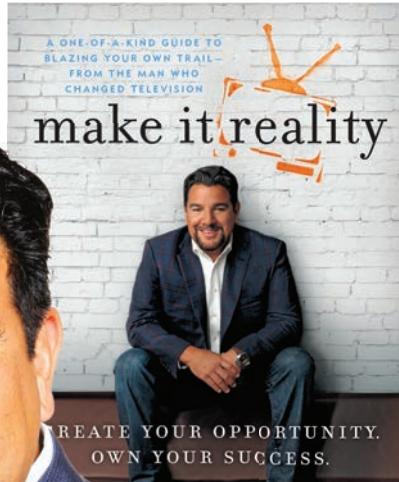
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Cris Abrego's memoir,
*Make It Reality: Create Your
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Making it Reality

Realscreen presents an excerpt from the motivational memoir penned by Endemol Shine North America co-CEO Cris Abrego.

THE STORYTELLER IN YOU

Some people are naturally great storytellers. They understand timing, surprise, suspense, and how to read a room. They know how to hook you and not let you go. They know when to be understated, when to be intense, and when to be over-the-top. The best jokes are stories. The best sales pitches are stories. If you listen to the best salespeople, you don't even know they are selling you. They're just telling you a story. Often, whenever you sell anything, you're really selling yourself. So the story you tell about yourself may be the difference between making the sale or not.

Let's take the classic job-interview setting. In seeking an entry-level job or looking to change career paths, what story you tell about yourself will no doubt vary depending on who is doing the hiring and what that person is looking for. Even though your résumé should tell a story about your career experience, I will let you know that only 5 percent of interviewees I've met get hired based on the résumé. The other 95 percent who get hired are those who can answer the questions that tell me who you are – with examples and story illustrations.

When I conduct an interview, the three storytelling skills I like to see are enthusiasm, engagement, and focus. Enthusiasm as a storyteller and communicator reveals your interests and your passion. If you're just making small talk, that's not as compelling as if you're talking about how much you learned from a tough challenge or why you love coming from a small town.

Enthusiasm – or passion – gives you an aura of confidence and presence. Always start with enthusiasm. Engagement can be twofold. It's how you listen and adapt to questions being asked of you and how you respond with your own level of curiosity. Engagement also shows your authentic point of view. Focus as a storyteller helps you stay concise while sticking to a theme or message. What you choose to focus on when you talk about yourself also tells a story about your internal motivator – what drives you. Are you more interested in the money, perks and hours, or the opportunity to continue on a path that you care deeply about?

Of course, if you want to know what kind of storytelling I like to hear from candidates for employment in my business, you can always grab my interest when you let me know how you consume stories regularly. How much TV do you watch? What shows do you like? Why? Why do you think they work or not? The best stories tell me about where you grew up, about your background, even about influential storytellers in your upbringing and education. What's your connection to culture? I'm looking to find out what are the things you believe or don't believe in terms of the future of television as an art form. Through the course of the interview I'll look for the value you might bring to our company in terms of reading, writing, and storytelling. And key to your story is to let me know where you look for your dream to take you. What is your ambition? What's your long game in this business?

The interviews that fall short for me are the sort of shotgun conversations where you come in and are all over the place. In the entertainment industry, shotgun storytelling might go something like this. "My goals? Well, I like directing. I'm good at it. But I've written some things, nothing that you've probably heard of, although writing is a strength. So is producing. At my last job, I worked closely with a producer, and I would consider producing."

That person has just come in and named all the jobs in the entertainment business. I've also had candidates say things, in order to qualify for a job, that weren't true about their interests and experience. First of all, the truth usually has a way of rising to the surface. Second, the truth makes for a winning story.

If you are interviewing for a job in research, say, but your dream is to produce documentary features, it's refreshing for you to be up front about your vision going forward. If you can get excited about doing the job being offered as a means to your future goals, it's a win/win. Ambition is golden – especially with a work ethic to back it up. When I meet with job candidates who entertain and inspire me with stories about where they come from, where they are today, and where they envision themselves going forward, I can't help but want to be part of that journey.

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Once a month at Chicago's Kartemquin Films, about 25 to 35 staff, associates and filmmakers file into the large conference area, better known as the "storefront," for a work-in-progress film screening. Surrounded by posters, books and old VHS tapes and DVDs, a filmmaker presents their material to the room and gets feedback on such elements as story structure and character development. *Making a Murderer* passed through in 2010, the forthcoming *Monster in the Mind* was presented in 2014 and *The Prison in Twelve Landscapes* was shown last September.

A well-meaning policy intended to encourage participants to speak positively about a project for 15 minutes before delving into the criticism didn't last long. The screenings, according to Kartemquin's founder and artistic director Gordon Quinn, tend to get "very hot." No one holds back.

"One of our core values is we want to help people make the film they're making, not the film that we would make," says the 74-year-old Quinn, whom most call the heart of the organization. "People are hungry for honest, constructive feedback."

To be sure, in a doc landscape where most filmmakers are flying solo without a network of support, the organization's legendary screenings – formally known as KTQ Labs – currently have a six-month wait list. *Life Itself* director Steve James, a 30-year veteran of Kartemquin, says you have to be prepared to have your film taken apart. "But they'll tell you what works, too."

This resilient, evolving and no-nonsense community approach has been a hallmark of Kartemquin since Stanley Karter, Jerry Temaner and Quinn formed the outfit (named with a combination of their last names) in 1966. With its 50th anniversary being marked with assorted events, including a June 24

This year, Chicago-based non-profit production outfit Kartemquin Films celebrates 50 years of bringing acclaimed, socially conscious documentary to audiences worldwide. Here, principals in the Kartemquin team reflect on its first half-century and what lies ahead.

BY MANORI RAVINDRAN

#KTQ Birthday Party at Chicago's Harris Theatre and a September retrospective at the UCLA Film and TV Archive at the Hammer Museum, Kartemquin is both reflecting on a legacy of social justice-driven filmmaking, and looking forward as a progressive not-for-profit media arts organization.

EARLY DAYS

Quinn, a recent recipient of the International Documentary Association's career achievement award, is fond of saying he never went to film school, but will swiftly add that what he studied instead – the liberal arts and humanities – he still uses every day in his film work, and applied in earnest in Kartemquin's early years.

The group's first doc was *Home for Life* (1966), a vérité study of two elderly people entering a senior's home, which was soon followed by *Inquiring Nuns* (1968), in which two young nuns wander Chicago



Kartemquin partner Jerry Blumenthal (left) with Susan Delson (center) and Sharon Karp (right) in the 1970s. (Courtesy of Kartemquin Films)

asking passers-by questions about their lives. The films made an impact, but didn't prompt the larger social examinations Kartemquin was after.

"We realized you can't just reflect society back upon itself. You have to have an analytical dimension also," says Quinn.

038 By this point, Stanley Karter had left, and

Jerry Blumenthal had joined as a partner. The group became more politicized when the Kartemquin Collective was formed between 1971 and 1972 with such figures as Jenny Rohrer, Suzanne Davenport, Richard Schmeichen and Judy Hoffman – all of whom believed in using film for social change.

"At one point we were reading and discussing [Chinese Communist Party leader Mao Zedong], and we'd have two meetings a week about structure and identity. It was a heady time. We were going to change the world," says Quinn of the 1970s, which saw the release of *What the Fuck Are These Red Squares?* (1970) and *The Chicago Maternity Center Story* (1976).

By 1978, however, the collective – which had now moved to its current headquarters at West Wellington and North Wolcott Avenues on Chicago's North Side – had broken down and parted ways. "The times were changing, and it was a real struggle because people needed to make a living," shrugs Quinn.

COURTSHIPS AND HOOP DREAMS

Steve James, then a few years out of grad school at Southern Illinois University, came to Kartemquin with producing partner Frederick Marx in 1986 with a 30-minute film on a single basketball court.

"At the time, it was going to be a short film, focused on a single playground. [Quinn] liked

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the idea, he liked us, and thought, 'Well, these tall white guys could maybe do this,'" laughs James. Production began on *Hoop Dreams* in 1987 and the doc premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 1994.

"When *Hoop Dreams* was released, it was like, wow, here's a film that millions of people saw who would never watch a film about an inner city family [or] a social problem," says Quinn. "But they watched *Hoop Dreams*, because it was about sports, about family dramas, about young men coming of age."

The film's success was a turning point for the organization, which pivoted back to its vérité roots, though Quinn hesitates to offer a neat definition of a Kartemquin undertaking.

"People talk a lot about what makes a Kartemquin film a Kartemquin film. And it's not like, 'Oh, it's pure vérité,' or it's this, or it's that. There are certain underlying ethical issues and guiding principles, but it's the filmmaker's film," he says.

This connection with creators, he says, is a courtship that leads to a long-term relationship. Steve James, for example, has

produced almost all his feature docs with Kartemquin, with the exceptions of *Reel Paradise* (2005) and *Head Games* (2012).

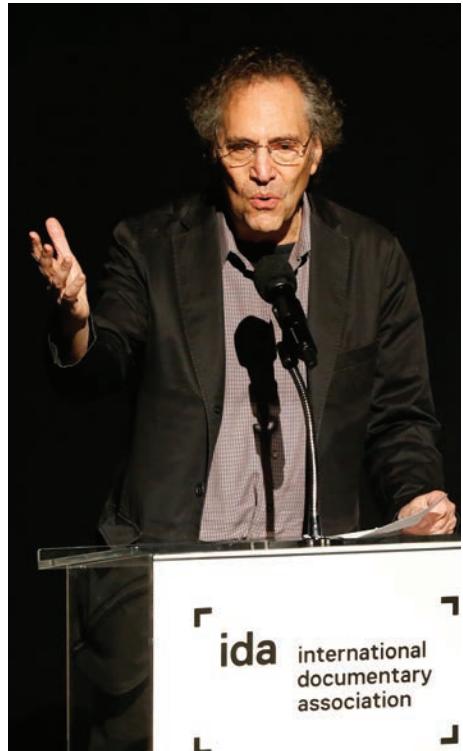
"It's about a relationship with a filmmaker that we like, and subject matter that we are passionate about and they are just as passionate about," adds Tim Horsburgh, director of communications and distribution, who joined in 2009 and now manages the "pipeline" of potential projects.

"If we commit to a film and that filmmaker, we see it as a lifelong marriage."

The Independent Television Service (ITVS), which Quinn helped to create, has coproduced and championed a dozen projects through Kartemquin, including the series *The New Americans* (2004) and acclaimed doc *The Interrupters* (2011).

"The Kartemquin filmmakers have brought forward characters and stories that are at the core of the ITVS mission – stories that represent the diversity of the world and have been underrepresented in mainstream media," Jim Sommers, senior VP of content at ITVS, says in an email.

Sommers, who has known Quinn and



Gordon Quinn, receiving the IDA Career Achievement Award in 2015.

039

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Steinberg

Kartemquin since the early 1990s, notes the organization often looks in their own backyard to bring forward a local story that speaks to a national and global audience.

"I think what sets them apart and why their work aligns so well with ITVS' mission is that they are also committed to making sure their programs are not only seen, but that outreach and engagement are central to the process

040

"The goal here is to make an impact with the conversation we're starting, the slice of life we're shedding a light on."

of their filmmaking. These stories have a purpose to inform and engage citizens and hopefully impact positive change."

LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS

In 2007, Kartemquin received one of eight international MacArthur Awards for Creative and Effective Institutions, a US\$500,000 boost that marked its first major institutional support. Alongside then-executive director Justine Nagan's sustainability-focused restructuring, Kartemquin was an evolving brand.

"For us and for a lot of groups that started in the 1960s, 'brand' is kind of a dirty word, so even though that's what we were doing, I had to be really careful about how to talk about it," she says.

Leadership concessions can be turbulent, but both Nagan and Quinn say the 2008

transition was relatively smooth.

Nagan first joined as a volunteer while completing graduate studies at the University of Chicago in 2003. Upon becoming staff in 2005, her first title was director of communications and distribution.

"What I did was try to talk about the role of media arts in the cultural landscape, and that it should be considered in the same way you think about visual and dramatic arts," says Nagan, who left Kartemquin last fall to serve as executive producer of PBS doc strand 'POV' and executive director of American Documentary.

"The advocacy work I did for the organization was about that, and basic stuff [such as] press and PR and making sure the organization was mentioned and not just the films, knowing you could leverage some of the more well-known filmmakers to help

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Kartemquin has made its home in Chicago's North Side since the late 1970s. (Courtesy of Kartemquin Films)

grow the field, and help nurture emerging filmmakers."

Quinn quips that Nagan "had the fire in the belly to lead." She not only built the organization into a vibrant not-for-profit with an engaged board, but also strengthened existing programs. The lively feedback screenings became KTQ Labs, a robust intern program was created and Diversity in Docs – a year-long professional development and mentorship program for emerging doc makers of color – was formed.

LOOKING AHEAD

On the heels of receiving \$1 million in grants from the MacArthur Foundation and Sage Foundation in December, the organization in February had its first "viral experience" after Quinn and producer Rachel Dickson uncovered footage of U.S. presidential hopeful Bernie Sanders getting arrested at a 1963 University of Chicago protest. This year also marks the new leadership of Betsy Steinberg, the former Illinois Film Office managing director who took over from Nagan as executive director.

Moving forward, Kartemquin is looking to bolster its distribution model through stronger relationships with partner venues, festivals, distributors and sales agents. Quinn adds that digital players such as Netflix and Amazon are distribution arenas they need to be more aware of. But for Quinn, an Indie Caucus member who led the charge to keep 'POV' and 'Independent Lens' in primetime slots, public television is still important.

"The biggest audience you're going to have is with an 'Independent Lens' or 'POV' broadcast. That's a bigger audience, and it's a more diverse audience," he says.

While a strategic planning process will take place between Quinn, Steinberg and the board only after anniversary celebrations, Steinberg maintains engagement, rather than commercial success, will remain as the primary objective.

"The goal here is to make an impact with the conversation we're starting, the slice of life we're shedding a light on and the social issues being illuminated by our films," she says.

"Films that show people ways to get engaged with society and to frame problems in such a way that people look at them and say not just that something ought to be done about that, but that something can be done," adds Quinn.

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THE SCENIC ROUTE

BY MANORI RAVINDRAN

Doc director Gary Hustwit saw great potential in using VR in non-fiction, but also saw the hurdles deterring doc makers from using the medium. With Scenic, he's hoping to level the playing field.

Gary Hustwit, director of such docs as *Helvetica* and the forthcoming *Workplace*, had been observing the early non-fiction efforts in VR for about a year when he noticed that doc makers weren't always being invited to use the technology – an oversight he felt was having an impact on the types of stories told in VR.

With the field thus far dominated by technologists and commercial directors, VR can be difficult to break into for doc makers, largely because the means of production – a GoPro Odyssey rig, for example – are still costly and hard to come by.

Hustwit saw more potential for the medium, and it involved bringing doc makers into the VR fold. The resulting work, he proposed, would introduce better storytelling, and this past spring, the director's new VR content studio, Scenic, was formed in the spirit of doing exactly that.

"Part of the reason I started Scenic was to try to get the tech in the hands of some amazing doc makers and see how we can impact the conversation,"

he tells *realscreen*. "There's been so much attention and resources put into the hardware and technology of virtual reality, and I don't think as much energy put into stories."

Officially launched in April, the studio is setting out to fund and produce VR doc shorts and series, with plans to release 40 films in the first year. The seed capital was privately funded, and Hustwit and his partners will do additional rounds of fundraising as Scenic evolves.

And evolve it will. The collective includes a stable of acclaimed doc makers – Jessica Edwards, Marshall Curry, Dawn Porter and Amir Bar-Lev, among others – and Hustwit is bringing in an additional five filmmakers, as well as taking pitches for one-time collaborations and one-off projects.

"Great doc makers obsess about story all the time and I think there are ways that VR can use things that traditionally shot docs can't," says Hustwit. "A lot of this is about trying to just come up with that language for non-fiction stories in VR, and play around with the possibilities."

Overall, the group hosts a range of experience levels: while some filmmakers have been experimenting in VR and have ideas on how to apply the technology, others were interested but hadn't had access to the necessary hardware – or were a little intimidated by VR.

Dawn Porter, for example, had been eager to try her hand in the field, but says the technological training was daunting. The *Gideon's Army* director points out that most traditional doc makers are still concerned by the intricacies of equipment needed, as well as the shoot and edit and sound sync processes.

"Gary's initiative means that each of us will have an experienced team and training on the equipment so we can focus on what we love – the storytelling," she tells *realscreen* over email.

Hustwit explains: "That's part of our mission – to sort of demystify VR and get the tech into the hands of these filmmakers and let them experiment with it, let them try it, fail, try again. I think the only way we're going to have truly transcendent work is to

let people like the filmmakers on our team experiment with the tech."

He also acknowledges the diversity among Scenic filmmakers, of which more than 50% are women. It's in stark contrast to the male-dominated VR content space, he laments. "That's something that we decided just cannot happen, not anymore. There's got to be more diversity on the creator's side."

Scenic has three projects – or, as Hustwit prefers to call them, pilot programs – in production right now, and a release plan is to be determined later. Because of how quickly things move in the VR space, he's reluctant to discuss any topics and stories until projects are closer to release, but hints that people should consider the types of filmmakers working with Scenic.

"Look at the subject matter of what the filmmakers have made, and you'll probably get a pretty good idea of the general subject matter we're going to be investigating in VR," says Hustwit.

Porter's doc *Trapped* follows abortion providers in the southern U.S. and Marshall Curry's recent

feature effort, *Point and Shoot*, centers on an American who joined the Libyan uprising while on a motorcycle trip through Northern Africa and the Middle East. Meanwhile, Jessica Edwards' *Mavis!* is a portrait of gospel and soul music legend and civil rights activist Mavis Staples.

Edwards, who three months ago didn't know how to operate a rig, describes Scenic as a filmmaker-driven undertaking that will drive home what's been missing in the space: good stories.

"The tech aspects of [VR] have been very much driving the content, and that's fine because that's what needed to happen," she says. "But now really great storytellers will be able to take that next step and really

make this a mass-consumed thing.

"We've been watching so much," she says, while adding that the directors in the Scenic roster also talk to each other and filmmakers outside that circle about the medium. "We talk about what's worked and what's not, and we're just playing with it as much as we can."

Curry says he joined Scenic because he's always been interested in different kinds of storytelling. Before making his first feature doc, *Street Fight*, he worked for years at a New York-based interactive design firm that made touch-screen interactive docs for museums and later became a web design shop.

"It was exciting work in those years, trying to figure out the grammar of how to tell stories or convey information in a brand new medium," he offers in an email. "And in many ways, VR these days feels very similar."

The director says it's been fun to discuss and swap ideas on VR with the collective, many of whom he calls friends. Traditional doc-making informs VR

to some extent, but the two media are also very different, he adds.

"There's a level of control that you have in making a traditional doc – picking a particular shot to convey an idea or emotion. But you have to give that up with VR. You curate a situation or environment, but you have to give up much of that control over details, which is both frustrating and liberating."

In terms of content, Scenic hopes to feature thematic series, with different directors contributing a short that fits into an overarching theme, as well as a longer-form doc feature broken into smaller pieces and released serially. A standalone doc could also be an option, including a feature-

length project – but only when the playback and capture technology gets better.

"I don't want to strap an Oculus to my head for 90 minutes," says Hustwit. "But I could watch 10 six-minute pieces if they're broken up like that."

Scenic will be viewable via Google Cardboard, Samsung Gear VR and Oculus Rift. There will also be a mix of embeddable video available on the Scenic website and VR app through assorted distribution companies. Hustwit says he wants everyone to be able to experience the material through a headset – "It's just so much more immersive" – but also recognizes that headset users are still a small percentage of the overall viewing audience.

"A lot of people haven't even watched the *New York Times* stuff on a Cardboard, and are even scared of it. I just hope that more documentary filmmakers can try VR non-fiction and at least understand what some of this hype is about and hopefully get involved in creating some."

"I wish there were 10 Scenics that were opening up this year," he concludes. "It's not even about there being competition: we need more people involved in creating great VR." •

"That's part of our mission – to demystify VR and get the tech into the hands of these filmmakers and let them try it, fail, try again."



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The Associated Press has created a digital portal for VR and 360-degree content.

Immersive archive

The proliferation of screens is stimulating avenues for creativity, but there is a downside for some. Life can also seem like it is moving along a one-way street, from window to window or screen to screen.

To break audiences out of this rectangular world, the Tribeca Film Festival programmed the 360-degree live experience *The Bomb* as the closing night film.

Directed by Smriti Keshari, Kevin Ford and Eric Schlosser, the 55-minute film is an experimental companion piece to Schlosser's book about nuclear weapons, *Command and Control*, which Robert Kenner also adapted into a traditional feature doc of the same name.

The film mixes archival footage with animations by Radiohead collaborator Stanley Donwood to place audiences in the center of a non-linear account of the history of nuclear weapons, from 1945 to the present day.

Using rarely seen footage Schlosser amassed while researching the book – as well as broadcast and archival sources – the filmmakers pulled out thematic visual patterns to draw an emotional narrative around the global arsenal of 15,000 nuclear weapons.

At Tribeca, the film was projected on a massive 360-degree, floor-to-ceiling screen rig created by London-based studio United Visual Artists as the rock band The Acid performed a psychedelic soundtrack.

"I had really been thinking about getting people inside of a film," Keshari explained to *realscreen* days before the Tribeca premiere in April. "We're in a time now where more and more of what we consume is through all these screens in this one-directional way. It's an experience that is seemingly more fixed so I wanted to create a live experience to give this subject the gravity that it deserves."

Keshari is not the only docmaker with an itch to move in more than one direction. CNN, the Associated Press, Sky, *The New York Times*, Discovery Communications and National Geographic Channel have launched 360-degree video and virtual reality (VR) production divisions.

Experimental tech is also becoming a staple of festival programming. *The Bomb* led a 23-project strong VR and interactive line-up at Tribeca, while Hot Docs launched a dedicated space for VR/interactive and programmed theater-based doc experiences. In June, Sheffield Doc/Fest will host an Alternate Realities Summit and Exhibition.

As filmmakers and journalists explore new

With VR and 360-degree viewing experiences on the rise, there are tantalizing possibilities for integrating archive content into a new form of storytelling. But when mixing past and present in virtual reality, along with innovation, new concerns also emerge.

BY KEVIN RITCHIE

storytelling possibilities, a big question mark remains around how archival footage shot in traditional letterbox aspect ratios can be represented in immersive environments.

A reversioning language for expanding 2D-shot video for VR has yet to be created, but beyond technological limitations, producers are brushing up against ethical lines, particularly when it comes to incorporating or recreating archive for VR.

"Before the technology gallops any further, it's time for an ethical reality check," the Associated Press' standards editor, Tom Kent, wrote in a blog post last August. "Viewers need to know how VR producers expect their work to be perceived, what's been done to guarantee authenticity and what part of a production may be, frankly, supposition."

Earlier this year, the Associated Press partnered with California-based chipmaker AMD to launch a VR and 360-degree digital portal. The news wire has produced *Rush Delivery*, an experience that took users inside a packaging facility from the POV of a package, and worked with LA-based media company RYOT on a project that takes viewers into a migrant camp in Calais, France.

When a journalist pitches a VR story, director of interactive and digital news production

RYOT used archival photos from 100 years ago in a climate change PSA for Sierra Club.



The 360-degree live experience *The Bomb* was Tribeca's closing film this year.

Paul Cheung asks why that particular story needs to be reported in 360 and applies a set of ethical and standards questions. What if a VR story idea required reversioning?

"It really depends on how we reversion it," he explains, adding that he could see the AP doing a before-and-after comparison or annotated video. "Unless we have really accurate detail, I highly doubt we are going to recreate the past."

The AP might be wary of re-enactments, but CNN is not. In March, the cable net produced a pair of VR videos pegged to the doc series *The Eighties*. One featured a recreation based on behind-the-scenes archival footage of CNN's 1986 Atlanta studio during the Challenger space shuttle explosion, and the other used footage of the Berlin Wall coming down in 1989.

Both videos were produced with VR app Timelooper using green screen, actors and a set created using CG. In the Challenger video, viewers scroll around the studio and watch as anchors and producers react to the original footage, which is displayed on CG monitors scattered around the set.

By contrast, the Berlin Wall video opens with present-day footage of Berlin's Brandenburg Gate before fading into a recreation and then four rectangular screens that surround the viewer with the original footage.

"We wanted to demonstrate that what we recreated was as close to the original as possible," says Jason Farkas, executive producer for CNN VR. "Whether it's in VR or fixed frame, our challenge is to meet the intensity of the original footage."

Ethical concerns also shaped CNN's creative decisions. For the Berlin Wall video, producers also cut to archive to make it clear that they were not trying to trick viewers. Additionally, CNN ensured the word "re-enactment" was visible no matter where a user looked, as per the company's guidelines for VR.

While recreating the past in VR using CGI and graphic packages is a popular option, it is limited to producers with decent budgets. VR camera rigs are increasingly affordable, but a post-production team that can build an environment from scratch is not.

Gil Pimentel, a consultant and former NGC exec, is working on a VR project for an environmental conservation non-profit. Unable to afford a pricey underwater shoot, he has been licensing footage from VR travel guide company Ascape and other companies prepping VR footage shot to spec.

He believes the ability to overlay archive into footage shot on multiple angles of a specific location that has remained unchanged could be another work-around for VR producers on tight budgets.

One example Pimentel gives of an unchanged location is the National Mall in Washington, DC, which, he says, could be used for a VR recreation of the 1963 March on Washington civil rights rally that culminated in Martin Luther King Jr's "I Have a Dream" speech.

"The question is, can you incorporate archival footage in a way that doesn't look hokey?" he says. "It would be interesting to superimpose frame-matched historical footage and let that background fade out, or treat it in a graphically interesting way so you get a sense of immersion in the experience without trying to be literal."

LA-based studio RYOT – which The Huffington Post acquired in April – has been a leader in VR thanks to projects such as *Seeking Home* for the AP, the solitary confinement experience *Confinement* for HuffPo, and *The Nepal Earthquake Project* featuring Susan Sarandon.

Last fall, the studio overlaid archival photographs from 100 years ago to show the impact climate change has had on Alaskan glaciers for the Sierra Club PSA, *Jared Leto Tour Guides Alaska's Melting Glaciers in 360°: Act In Paris*.

The video is typical of how non-360 footage is portrayed in virtual reality: from within a rectangular box.

RYOT Huffington Post CEO Bryn Mooser calls the push to integrate archive more seamlessly into 360 video "the most exciting challenge in VR."

Unlike his colleagues at the Associated Press and CNN, Mooser does not see ethical obstacles around adapting archive for VR, if it's done in the interest of representing the truth.

"It's the artist's job to break the rules and challenge ideals included in the ethics of storytelling," he says. "Leave the hand wringing to the academics to debate what they think is right and wrong."

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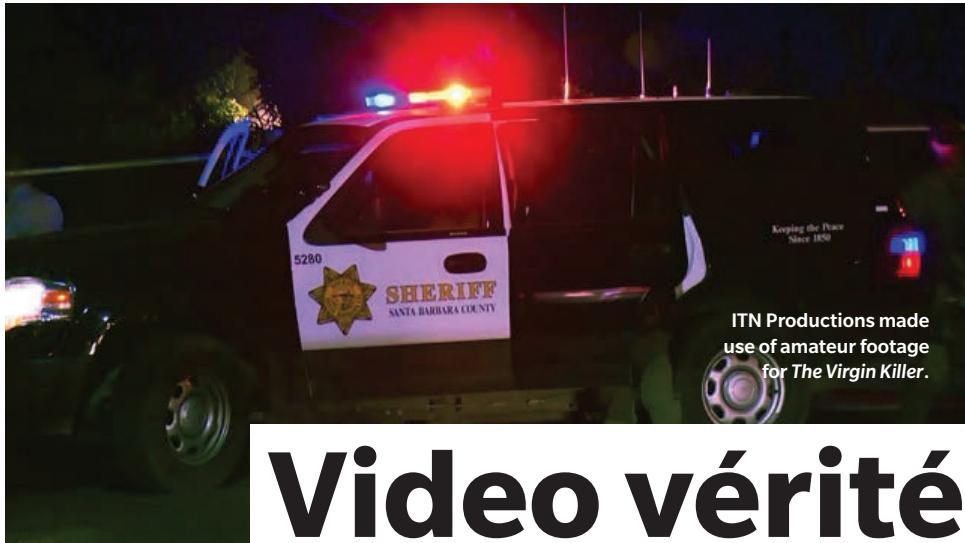
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Video vérité

BY KEVIN RITCHIE

In a genre rife with recreations, UGC, CCTV and amateur-shot footage is playing an increasingly important role in the production of true crime content.

Eighteen months ago, network execs and researchers gathered at the Realscreen Summit to dissect the trends and socio-economic conditions fueling the rise of true-crime programming.

Crime has long been a staple of television documentary, but the successes of serialized programs such as HBO's *The Jinx: The Life and Deaths of Robert Durst* and Netflix's *Making A Murderer* have given rise to a new strain of single-storyline series, from National Geographic Channel's *Missing Deal* to Discovery Channel's *Killing Fields*.

As 2016 reaches its mid-way point, another trend in crime programming is on the rise and it's a familiar one: user-generated video.

Last year, an episode of Investigation Discovery's *See No Evil* attracted 1.8 million viewers – enough to make it the network's number one series in 2015. The net has since picked up a second season from UK indie Arrow Media and Canada's Saloon Media.

See No Evil retraces crimes using closed-circuit television (CCTV) footage taken from cameras in parking lots, stores, ATM machines and private residences, which are then fleshed out with interviews, recreations, amateur footage and archive from other sources.

In the wake of the show's popularity, ID is ramping up its focus on crime stories built around such gritty footage.

"The big change for us has been people filming on their cellphones," explains Sara Kozak, Investigation Discovery's senior VP and head of production. "After the success of *See No Evil* we've looked at all the different ways

that footage captured at homes – whether it's on 16 mm or latterly on phones – can be used. That's definitely going to be more present in our series going forward."

Often this footage is introduced as evidence in criminal trials, making it relatively easy to obtain. For Kozak, archive is the second-most important element in her shows after interviews, with recreations coming in third.

However, ethical concerns can arise when the amateur footage is shot by a perpetrator, as was the case in a 2014 killing spree in Isla Vista, California that left six people dead and many others wounded.

On May 23, 22-year-old Elliot Rodger went on a violent rampage with a knife, machete and three automatic hand guns before taking his own life. On the day of the attack, he uploaded a self-shot video to YouTube in which he outlined his plan and explained that he wanted to punish women for rejecting him.

ITN Productions produced a quick-turnaround documentary, *The Virgin Killer*, for Channel 4 in the UK and A&E in the U.S. that summed up the crime thusly: "A mass murder for the digital age, told by the killer himself."

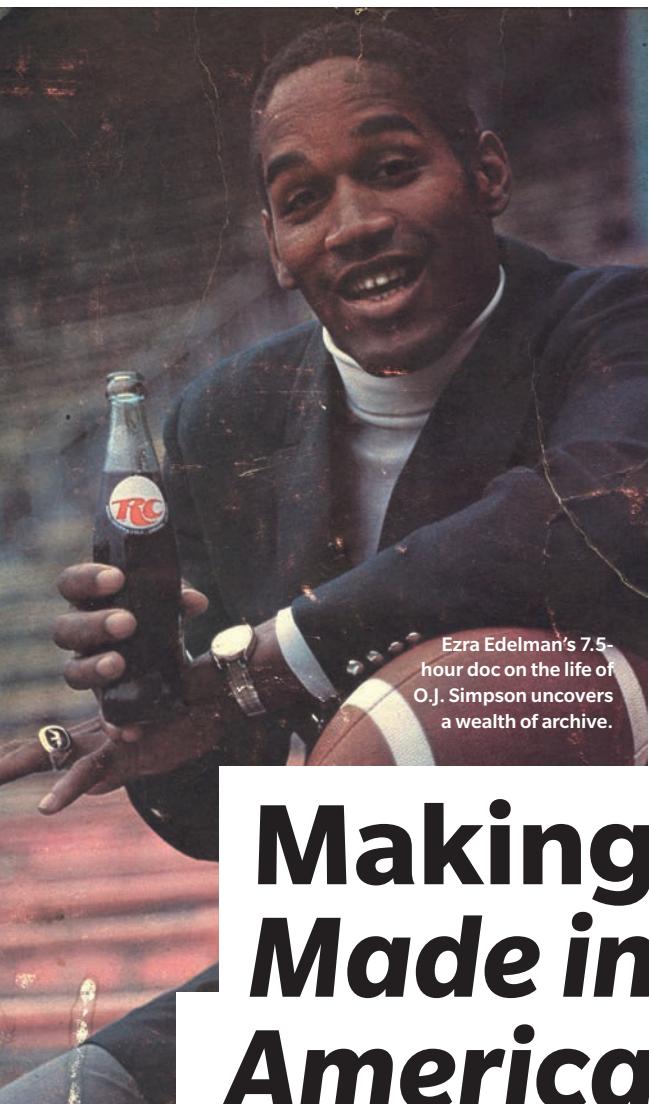
Although the documentary features a narrator, it frequently cuts back to the footage of Rodger talking to the camera in his car on the day of the murders, and quotes from an autobiography called *My Twisted World* that he emailed to a dozen friends and family members.

"We were able to more or less use him and his original voice as a narrator in that program," explains Ian Russell, ITN Productions' head of international programs, adding that the material was public domain.

If the footage is not in the public domain or available via private individuals, it can be sourced via specialist agencies that deal in user-generated footage for caught-on-camera type shows.

In the case of *The Virgin Killer*, the challenge was not procurement – the wealth of available material is what led the networks to greenlight – but an ethical one: how to incorporate Rodger's voice while sticking to the facts and not ceding to his version of events.

"We stuck to his quotes where he was describing what happened. If he had a subjective opinion about something we immediately buttressed it with a contextualization from a psychologist or someone else so he was never really allowed to 'own' the program."



Making *Made in America*

BY KEVIN RITCHIE

Realscreen talks to one of the producers behind ESPN's seven-hour-plus doc event, *O.J.: Made in America* about the major role archive of all forms played in its production.

The 20th anniversary of O.J. Simpson's double murder trial ending in a "not guilty" verdict has inspired several outlets to revisit the landmark case and its enduring legacy with programming. *O.J.: Made in America*, director Ezra Edelman's seven-and-a-half-hour doc series for ESPN about the former NFL star's life and career before, during and after the case, is the most ambitious.

The doc premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and screened in marathon sessions at the Tribeca Film Festival and Hot Docs. ABC will debut the first episode of the series on June 11 with the remaining four airing on ESPN as part of the cable net's '30 For 30' doc strand.

Although the first two 90-minute episodes delve into Simpson's early years before the 1994 murders of his ex-wife Nicole Brown and her friend Ron Goldman, roughly 50% of the series' run-time is nonetheless devoted to archival imagery related to the trial and crime scene.

Footage not only came from big archive houses and broadcasters such as ESPN, ABC, the NFL, Corbis and Getty, but also from sources interviewed in the film including Goldman's father Fred, author and photographer Lawrence Schiller, Simpson's former manager Norman Pardo, his former agent Mike Gilbert and Thomas Riccio, the collectibles dealer involved in the Las Vegas heist that landed Simpson in a Nevada prison on a 33-year sentence.

Ahead of the broadcast premiere, *realscreen* spoke with *O.J.: Made In America* producer Caroline Waterlow about the archival undertaking behind the film.

How big was the archival effort on *O.J.: Made In America*?

It was a massive archival effort. I oversaw a bit of everything and I also hired an archival producer, Nina Krstic, to oversee the specific archival requests coming in from the editors. We also had several researchers under her.

The issue with many historic films is you are trying to find things and find out if things even exist. Whereas this film is the opposite: there is so much stuff in the world that's been documented. There were two trials – the criminal trial and a civil trial. That was

useful from a research point of view because they did discovery for both trials.

We went through all the trial transcripts and pulled specific days and chunks that we needed along the way because we just couldn't bring in nine months of trial footage. I don't have the storage space or manpower.

Did knowing you would have so much trial footage inform how you used the other archival material?

The trial footage is a certain number of cameras and it's crappy video from the '90s. Texturally it's not the most beautiful looking footage but it is familiar to people who saw it at the time. Knowing that footage was a big element in the film we wanted to flush out the other parts of the story with more diverse textures.

Tell me about the decision to include the uncensored crime scene photos.

It was a big discussion. We felt it was necessary to show you what kind of crime this was. I don't think I'd ever really thought about how long the crime took place for, what exactly happened, where the knife went and how many times the knife went into each victim. It's gory detail but it does speak to the nature of the crime in a powerful way. It's not like someone walked up with a gun and a silencer, shot somebody and left. It was important to show what specifically happened to these victims because that gets lost in the shuffle. This was a different kind of crime.

How difficult was it to persuade sources to give you footage?

Everybody had a certain amount of fatigue around the press coverage of this topic. Whether it was asking them for footage or to do interviews, that fatigue was something we all slightly underestimated. All of these people have had a bad media experience around this case. We were coming in the wake of that, so trying to prove trustworthiness and convince people you're trying to do a deeper analysis of the story was hard. We did have to spend a lot of time getting people to trust us.



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CRIME CUES

True crime factual programming is on the rise, and so is the use of dramatic production music designed to ramp up the suspense. But there are ways to use music that can help your production stand out in the crowd... or the police line-up.

BY BARRY WALSH

Tension, cliffhanger moments, the big reveal – all are part and parcel of the typical story arc for a true crime factual program. But while they may be staples of the structure of such content, producers can, and should, entertain several options when it comes to scoring the show. *Realscreen* talked to composers and music house execs about how to ensure the music in your true crime project doesn't come off as criminally cliché.

Variations on a theme

While orchestral cues are most often affiliated with crime and dramatic shows, the sonic palette should take into account the different elements of the story – ranging from talking head interviews, to recreations.

"I feel like the audience is willing to go with wide ranges of music as long as they are cohesive and make sense for what is on the screen," says Brad Burnside, head of television for Audio Network U.S. "There are traditional orchestral elements that give enough light tension to reflect the subject matter without overpowering dialogue, but electronic underscores or acoustic overtones could also help enhance mood and style just as effectively."

Sharon Jennings, VP of music and marketing at APM Music, says atmospheric, sound design and drone tracks should be integrated into the mix, "often with a slight undertone of tension or impending disruption."

Establish an atmosphere

Jennings adds that crime shows have story arcs that need their own musical approaches. "Not all is gloom and doom. Sometimes the happy calm-before-the-storm calls for happy-go-lucky tracks."

Burnside is a fan of sonic branding – applying a consistent type of music or instrumentation to characters and situations. "One of your underdogs could always be accompanied by a sad solo violin with

a subtle percussive underscore to show weakness but a drive to succeed," he offers as an example.

Composer Steve Everitt, who works with APM and has scored such projects as *Murder Made Me Famous* and *Very Bad Men*, is a proponent of bypassing orchestral bombast in favor of more unconventional and perhaps unsettling instrumentation. "I think electronic and synthesised music is often overlooked in favor of traditional dramatic compositions in true crime and TV programming in general," he offers. "I don't mean generic dance or ambient music here, but rather dark futuristic and occasionally disturbing compositions, such as Geoff Barrow and Ben Salisbury's score for *Ex Machina*."

Avoid cliché

"To me, there are certain sounds that have become predictable, the 'Psycho strings' effect coming to mind during a murder scene," says Audio Network's Burnside. "But it all depends on the creative direction the production is following. I like to approach each project as a fresh playing field, building on the musical elements that work best within individual scenes and characters."

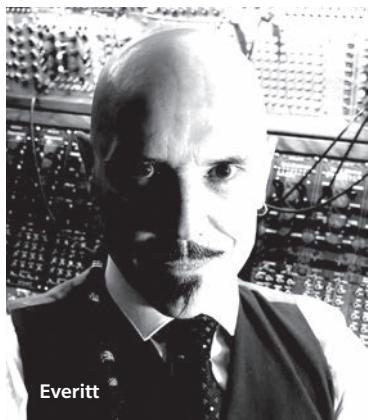
Everitt says that while dramatic orchestral flourish can work "in a genuinely epic context," such tendencies should be kept on a short leash. "I feel that epic, orchestral movie-trailer cues on television have desensitized audiences to the point that these cues now sound clichéd and predictable. I also think that such emphatic and overwrought compositions in true crime programming can be inappropriate for more nuanced storylines."

However, David Mount, VP of business development for Warner/Chappell Production Music, says that while the tide is turning and "not all crime series these days are your stereotypical dramatic and big orchestral sounds of years past," some shows can use that approach effectively.

"The fact of the matter is some shows use the typical styles such as ambient, drones, or dramatic orchestral arrangements, and some shows are going in a completely different direction such as quirky and light. It depends on the music supervisor and the network."

The key is to work closely with the music team to arrive at the right mix. "The more information we have, the quicker we can find the perfect cues for the project," says Mount.

"Describing a tone you are looking for isn't always as easy as calling out a few keywords, so bonding with someone on their favorite director's musical choices and creative style absolutely establishes a baseline," adds Burnside. •



Everitt



Burnside



Mount

BY BRENDAN CHRISTIE

The heart of the story

Twenty years on, Minnesota's Tremendous! Entertainment is still a place where character matters.



As the proverb says, from humble beginnings great things come. That's certainly the case with Minnesota's Tremendous! Entertainment. Now celebrating its 20th year, the prodco began as an exercise in frustration – from not being able to find a good kids show.

Founder and president/CEO Colleen Needles Steward was an award-winning CBS news anchor with young kids at home when, irritated by the lack of shows available for them, she decided to take matters into her own hands and pitch then-fledgling Animal Planet an idea for a scripted, live-action puppet show targeted to preschoolers.

"It was about as far away from my core skills as you could possibly get," she recalls. And while that may have been the case, she was on point enough that the cable net signed up for a 26-episode order. More importantly, it was the first step towards a bigger revelation.

"Through the course of pitching that show and going to the various markets," she recalls, "I discovered the world of unscripted and non-fiction programming. I had no intention of actually starting a television production company, and that was the first and last children's show we ever did, for good reason. I started

pitching documentaries and then unscripted series, and discovered that I had a passion and a love for it, and that's really how the company got its start.

"I love a good story," she says. "Having come from news, I was generally given about a minute and a half to tell a story. So the idea of being able to take an hour, or a half hour, was very appealing.

But then it was also the subject matter, and the ability to tell stories that anyone could enjoy."

That was to be the real point of differentiation. Tremendous! was going to tell different kinds of stories – ones that "didn't make you feel worse for watching them," as the founder puts it. The prodco would focus on finding inspiring characters who were trying to change the world, or at least their small part of it.

And it was all going to happen from Minnesota.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Needles Steward admits that, in the beginning, the location of Tremendous! world headquarters was a hindrance. The buyers were on either coast, and while the local talent pool was largely untapped, it was limited. (Tremendous! would open an LA outpost in 2012 initially for development, but eventually for full-on production) However, as Ben Franklin once so famously said, "Every problem is an opportunity



TREMENDOUS! SPOTLIGHT



Left: *Ghost Asylum* for *Destination America*; right: *Rock the Park* for ABC.



in disguise." That certainly holds true of the company's Midwestern roots.

"In the beginning, it was an obstacle," says Needles Steward. "It's now a huge benefit. We live in a part of the country that often gets overlooked, and so we got really good at finding great characters and great stories that were just not getting noticed."

Enter one of the company's biggest successes to date – *Bizarre Foods* with Andrew Zimmern. In production for over 12 years now, *Bizarre Foods* was exactly the type of show Tremendous! wanted to do. Fronted by a charismatic character, it's an exploration of world culture through food, with a clever entertainment hook. But that's not to say it was an easy sell.

In fact, Zimmern says it was anything but – possibly because he originally wanted to call the series either *Food Freaks* or *Wandering Spoon*. ("The worst title of all time," he jokes.) Eventually, Travel Channel decided to bite. The cable net greenlit two specials – *World's Best Ballpark Foods* and *Bizarre Foods of Asia* – and tested to see which one would perform better. *Bizarre Foods* won out, and the first series was commissioned. The rest, as they say, is culinary TV history.

It was exactly the type of show Tremendous! wanted to build its brand on. "Sure, I wanted to make a show about food and culture," says Zimmern. "But I really wanted to change the world. I know that sounds ambitious, but my goal was to create a monstrous platform through which I could talk about the issues that were

important to me.

"If you walked into a network and said: 'I want to make a show about preaching patience, tolerance and understanding in a world that needs a lot of all those things, and I want to do it by talking about the things we have in common, like food and our love of humanity, rather than the things that divide us,' they would toss you out of the office. But that's exactly the show that I wanted to make. And so, we just reversed it. If the hook needs to be 'fat white guy goes around world and eats bugs,' I'll do it."

The show quickly became a hit for Travel, but there was some initial worry about whether it would have legs. Were there enough *Bizarre Food* stories to tell?

Shannon Keenan Demers started at Tremendous! as a freelance producer working on the first season of the series. (She would leave and return over a decade later to become SVP of production and creative.) "I remember we went in for our first meeting at Travel and we were talking about the first 13 episodes," she recalls, "and their big question

was: 'Do you think there is going to be enough to do more than 13?' I will never forget – Andrew just started talking, and within two minutes it became clear that there are about nine million of these episodes we could do."

But beyond being good television, *Bizarre Foods* also perfectly demonstrated the character

of the company. "With this show, and with Tremendous! in particular, we are pretty good at listening to each other," says Zimmern. "I think that's the secret to any good relationship, whether it's a marriage, a business partnership or a team. If you don't listen to each other, you are doomed to live in the problem."

The chemistry was clear even to their partners. Ross Babbit, who joined Travel about five

years ago as SVP of programming (and who has since left to go independent), says the show works well thanks to both what's on the screen and what's behind it.

"To break through and last 10-plus seasons, there has to be an authenticity and richness to the storytelling," he observes.

"There's a lot of programming out there that I would describe as a mile wide and an inch deep. And once you get past the press release, it's hard for it to stick for more than a season – if you're lucky to even get to the end of a full season."

"You have to do great work," he adds, "and that always speaks for itself, and the audience will let you know whether they appreciate your work or not. But the reasons you keep calling production companies back to do more work is because they are good people who do great work – on time and on budget. When you're spending millions of dollars on a TV show, you are trusting that production company to deliver the goods. Tremendous! has just built that reputation over the years."

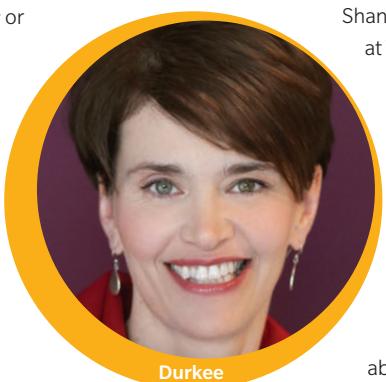
AVOID THE PIGEONHOLE

Twenty years on, the Tremendous! slate has certainly grown and developed, but you still see a clear manifestation of the company's slogan: 'Where Character Matters.' It has cultural anthropology with *Bizarre Foods* (Travel), paranormal with *Ghost Asylum* (*Destination America*) and natural history with *Rock the Park* (ABC), as well as entertainment-driven music shows like *Off Pitch* (VH1) and *Bama State Style* (Lifetime). All led by strong and entertaining characters, all very different, and perhaps most important, all for different clients. None of that has been an accident.

Jane Durkee, VP/COO of Tremendous!, notes that diversity and flexibility are key to survival. "A show like *Rock the Park*, for example, has brought



Keenan Demers



Durkee

"Viewers have set the bar higher, and that's causing us to spend more time and effort to find these great characters."

us an additional level of exposure," she observes. "It's being aired on ABC on Saturday mornings, and that's a different audience than we had been connecting with previously. So that's an incredible opportunity, and we hope to leverage that and continue to take opportunities for additional development in that area.

"I think we've been able to identify the kinds of shows we want to do across a variety of genres – shows that are positive, uplifting and entertaining – which is really fun for the company because we're not pigeonholing ourselves. We're staying true to our company motto, but we can have our hands in different genres."

That's been most recently demonstrated in *For Peete's Sake*, a series that follows the lives of *21 Jump Street* star Holly Robinson Peete and former NFL quarterback and co-host of Fox Sports' *The Best Damn Sports Show Period*, Rodney Peete. The series is slotted into OWN's Saturday night lineup.

Jill Dickerson, SVP of programming at OWN, says Tremendous! developed the relationship with the subjects and brought the show to the network – and it was quickly evident that the initial order of six episodes was not going to be enough for the stories they had to tell, so they upped it to eight.

"What made it possible to really greenlight the show, in addition to being in love with the talent, was knowing that Colleen and Shannon were really listening to us as we talked about our brand, and how important it was for us to make positive television and tell positive stories," says Dickerson. "They were really open to collaborating with us, and I think that's what we look for in a production company.

"First and foremost, [producers] need to be strong storytellers, but we look for people who treat their talent with respect and who have integrity. We look for people who are willing to collaborate. They have to be sensitive to and excited about our brand, and able to shape the story within it. I think it's interesting that their slogan is all about character – that's something we have in common."

KEEPING IT REAL

To Dickerson and OWN, it's all about telling fresh stories that are both entertaining and positive.

"There aren't enough of those on the landscape," she says.

Those are exactly the types of stories that have helped Tremendous! attract some great talent behind the scenes as well as in front of the camera. One of the company's newest hires for the LA office, head of development Ronak Kordestani, says she chose to come to the prodcos because of that approach and chemistry. "I chose Tremendous!" she notes, "because in a town that thrives on gossip, I could not find one person to speak ill of this company.

"Personally, what I love is the return to actual reality," she continues. "I think viewers have set the bar higher, and that's causing us to spend a little more time and effort to find these great characters, to unearth these worlds that we did not know about before, and to shine a light on situations we hadn't before."

Of course, it all comes down to the storytelling – how you choose to frame the tale for the characters you find. "For us, entertainment is never at the expense of someone else," observes Keenan Demers. "When we did *Off Pitch* for VH1, about a glee club in Wisconsin, they weren't necessarily the greatest singers in the world, but we weren't ever making fun of them. They were in on the story we were telling.

"It would have been really easy to go the icky route and make fun of these people, but instead we celebrated who they were, their differences and what made them all so entertaining. We were all in it together. That's what it's about. If you can sit and watch it with your kids, or with your mother, and nobody gets embarrassed, then it's probably a Tremendous! show."

It comes back to the tone Colleen Needles Steward set from the start. "I think it reflects Midwestern values and approach," says



Kordestani

OWN's *For Peete's Sake* follows TV star Holly Robinson Peete, former NFL quarterback Rodney Peete, and their family.

Kordestani. "And I mean that in the best possible way. A lot of company owners forget that. They set out to create this environment, and then they get lost in the weeds – whether it's because they are showrunners themselves or they have got other things to do, they don't spend as much time setting the tone for a company. This is a place where that heart really beats clearly."

And in the end – in a genre that has suffered plenty of slings and arrows – it's that steady course that has been the right one for Tremendous! and its team.

"For me, it's just been about following your passion, keeping your focus and sticking to an ideal," sums up Needles Steward. "We're not going to do something because it's going to get ratings or sell – we're going to do things that have a positive impact on the world. And I think that if you believe in something, and are patient and pursue it, you can find success. But it's really just about following your passion and being true to it." •

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Say Yes to Success

BY DANIELE ALCINII



As it celebrates 10 years in business, *Say Yes to the Dress* prodco Half Yard Productions is looking to expand its reach – both in terms of content and international exposure.

Having spent more than a decade overseeing programming and production on the network side of the industry, in 2006, former Discovery Channel exec Greensfelder and TLC alumnus Sean Gallagher transferred their insights into audience and network needs to the seller side of the fence. That know-how led their production company, Bethesda-based Half Yard Productions, to be one of the first to dive into the primetime wedding space, stylishly breaking through with TLC's docusoap *Say Yes to the Dress* in October 2007. Nearly 10 years later, the company is still making waves in the genre, having most recently launched season 14 of the long-running gown series.

"We want to be the best that we can be and that means taking risks and doing things that are different," says Greensfelder, as the company marks its 10th year in business.

"I think with our background as programmers, we're populists – we want to make shows that people want to watch and we're not embarrassed to say it. That's what we're good at."

The bridal space has certainly proved fruitful, with the company bringing wedding makeover show *Brides Gone Styled* to TLC; launching a British adaptation of *Say Yes to the Dress* for TLC UK – currently in production – with acclaimed Welsh fashion designer David Emanuel at the helm; and developing wedding format *All Hail the Veil* for Channel 4 Daytime,

which beat the average slot for young demographics by over 25% when it aired in January.

"We've been out [in the UK] trying to sell that format internationally and we've had some interest," said Greensfelder of *All Hail the Veil*. "Our core business will always be the U.S. market but finding those

right projects and formats that can travel to the UK market is something we're interested in."

The sub-genre still has plenty of legs, especially in Half Yard's hands. It recently launched

Say Yes to the Prom for TLC on May 20. The Monte Durham-hosted one-off reaches out to underprivileged high school women and provides them not only with access to top designers and prom dresses, but pathways to internships and scholarships.

Though currently only an hour-long special for the network, the *Say Yes to the Dress* spin-off has the potential to become an annual tent-pole event around the network's existing initiative, Greensfelder explained.

"Half Yard really excels at digging in to the personal stories of the women on these shows and the relationships that go on between daughter and parents, her friends and bridesmaids," offers Howard Lee, executive VP of development and production at TLC and GM for Discovery Life.

"It's such a specific type of storytelling to make sure there's an honesty and it's incredibly emotional," Lee continues. "That's



Greensfelder



“We’re always going to do these core series that become the mainstays of the network.”

Half Yard goes behind the scenes at a blacksmith business in History's *Iron and Fire*.

hard to get out of people who are not part of the TV world and it's amazing how they can draw that out of the women on these series."

Another area in which Half Yard excels is pitching passion projects, says Denise Contis, executive VP of development and production at Discovery Channel. Drawing on his personal interests as a springboard for series ideas, Gallagher has traveled across the U.S., Canada and Europe in search of unique characters hoping to share their personal stories through the Half Yard lens.

When Discovery revealed that it was looking to bolster its slate with another motorcycle series, Half Yard's Gallagher – a former executive producer on the Pilgrim Media Group-made *American Chopper* – began pitching various talent and storylines to the network. The end result is the forthcoming *Sacred Steel*, which provides an inside look at one of the most exclusive biking brotherhoods in the world that creates and restores high-end, well-run motorcycles. "We figured if we're going to do a motorcycle show, somehow it needs to stand apart from what was done before and that's the straight up, brightly lit garage build show," explained Gallagher. "It's not a tack-on, weld-on show – it's about really getting your hands dirty and knowing what you're doing."

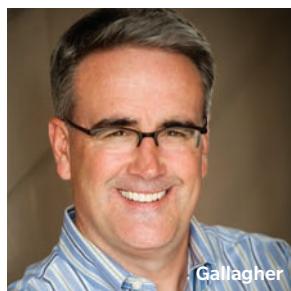
"Sean [Gallagher] worked with the development team [at Discovery] to really create something that ticked off the boxes for us [and] makes a show successful in the motoring genre, so that when [Half Yard] actually did come in and pitch the show, it was a must buy," Contis added. "He was that passionate, that sure and had dug in that deeply to what really turned into an easy buy for us."

Though an exact premiere date had yet to be announced at press time, *Sacred Steel* is scheduled to bow at the tail end of summer.

Elsewhere, in April, History launched Half Yard's *Iron and Fire*, following Arkansas blacksmith Daniel Casey and his Casey Arms business as it crafts a variety of historic weapons from raw steel

and timber. In addition, the prodco is behind National Geographic Channel's *Diggers*, and sophomore seasons for Velocity's *Junkyard Empire*, which premiered as the channel's second-highest rated series ever among men 18 to 49; and Animal Planet's acclaimed *The Last Alaskans*.

For the latter, Half Yard's Greensfelder tells *realscreen* numerous other networks and production companies had been sniffing around the series' talent with the hopes of securing them to contracts. What eventually swayed the cast's decision to sign with Half Yard, however, was the company's willingness to not only take risks but also its strong track record of capturing intimate stories with accuracy.



Gallagher

"We spent a lot of time and resources [cultivating] the natural, boots-on-the-ground relationship-developing and story-developing, and I don't think a lot of companies would," Greensfelder explains. "That was a belief from the top down that this [story] was something really special."

The risk that Half Yard took with the series was to allow the storyline to unfold through a "quality premium documentary style" that utilized *cinéma vérité* and other techniques seen more often in feature docs than unscripted television.

In the end, that decision has paid dividends as the first season of the series rated as Animal Planet's second-most watched series to date with an audience of 1.5 million, behind only *River Monsters*.

"I think at the time that we had decided to do *Last Alaskans*, we had decided never to do another Alaska show," says Marjorie Kaplan, president of content at Discovery Networks International, with a laugh.

With the market pretty well saturated by Alaska-set non-fiction series already, the ethos at Animal Planet was to ensure that a series

taking place in *The Last Frontier* would be unlike anything that was already on air.

"What sold us was the concept and the creative vision that we saw in the tape. We were absolutely certain [that ethos] was shared by Half Yard when we sat down to talk creatively, because what we saw and what we talked about was such a fresh and surprising perspective on something which could have been entirely familiar," Kaplan, who greenlit the series at the time as group president of Animal Planet, TLC and Velocity, explains.

The proco – which was acquired by ProSiebenSat.1 subsidiary Red Arrow Entertainment Group in 2014 – has also been making new strides into the digital space thanks in part to Red Arrow's digital-only production entity Ripple.

Half Yard's first fruits in the digital sphere have come in the form of *Elevator Makeover*, a makeover series that takes place between the first and 42nd floors of a Manhattan high-rise, for

Condé Nast digital vertical Glamour.com; and the company's first foray into virtual reality with an experience accompanying *The Last Alaskans*. Greensfelder says Half Yard is "sort of" investing in the burgeoning VR space and "playing around" with a rig for potential future projects.

"ProSieben has looked at the VR space in general so there may be some opportunities through Red Arrow to work with other VR partners," she offers.

New platforms create new opportunities, and Half Yard is now looking into further chances to develop content direct for digital, having set up meetings with various buyers and streamers like Amazon and Netflix, according to Gallagher. As for what else is in store for the future, Greensfelder says Half Yard's dedication to developing signature series remains intact. Still, both Greensfelder and Gallagher are

looking to expand the company's event docuseries, event miniseries and hybrid-scripted programming, having most recently optioned the company's first book property deal for a fictional telling of a real life story, to be developed into an event miniseries.

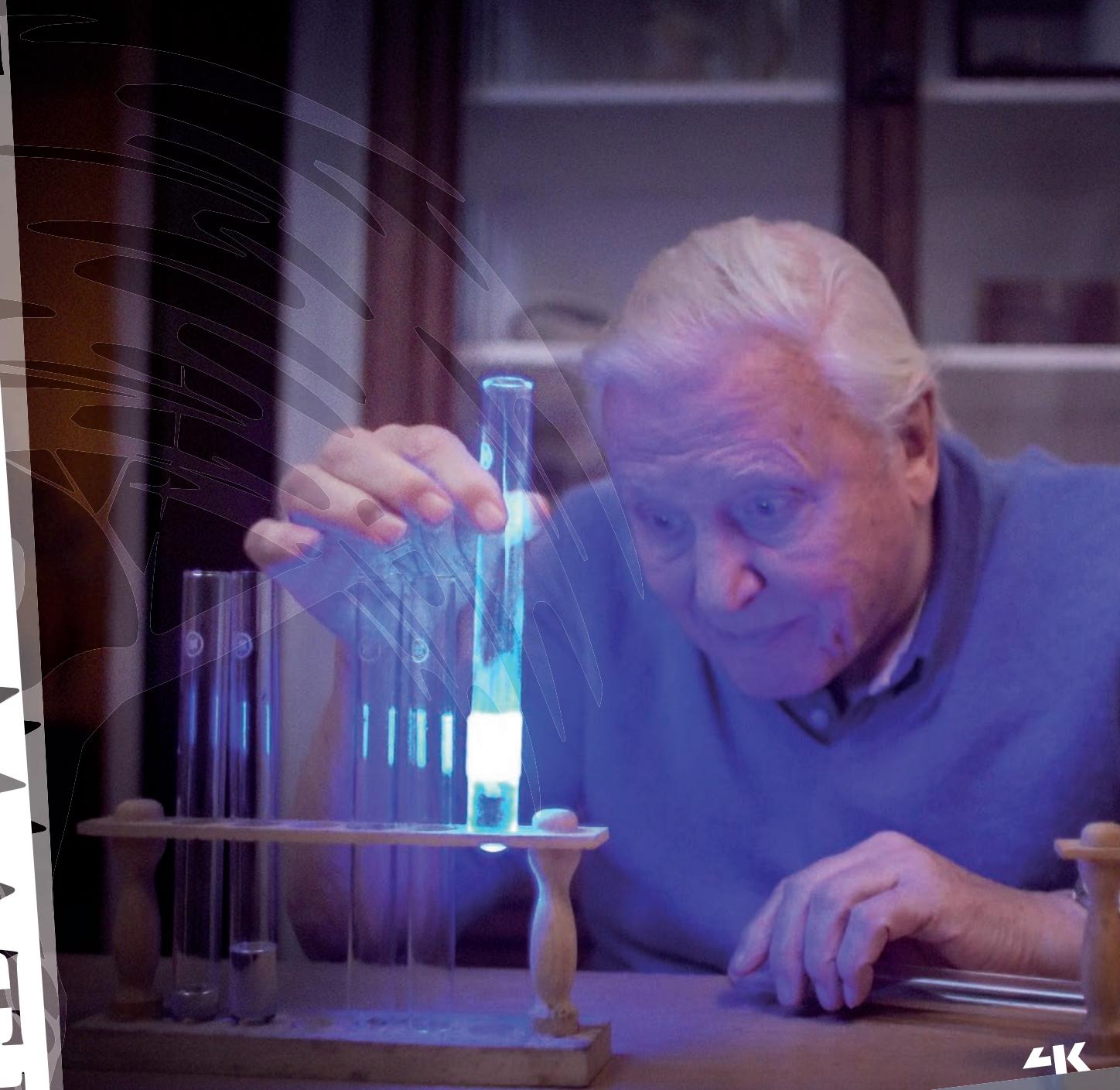
"We can continue to do these special event things but we're always going to do these core series that become the mainstays of the network," Greensfelder maintains. "We're also looking for the right opportunities to grow and sell some more things internationally." •

"We're populists – we want to make shows that people want to watch and we're not embarrassed to say it."



The Last Alaskans, airing on Animal Planet, garnered critical acclaim.

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AVOIDING AN E&O S.O.S.

"I don't need E&O until I get distribution."

While sometimes that's true, it's definitely not always true. It's especially not true for non-fiction projects that are controversial or docs or narrative films that are based on true stories where not all of the rights have been obtained. Worst-case scenario – you're in development on a biopic film and you don't have the life rights. You issue a press release. The next day the subject's lawyer sends you a "cease and desist" letter saying you can't make your movie.

Well, legally he can't stop you, but an insurance company will likely view the receipt of a claim letter as posing too high of a risk to insure. This could prevent you from getting insurance and potentially make your project unviable.

Lesson: Get E&O before there is any publicity about your film.

Filling out the application incorrectly

The E&O application can be daunting if you've never filled it out before. But it's important to take the time to understand it and fill it out correctly. Did you get a warranty of originality from your composer? You should have, but if you didn't, don't say you did. If there's a copyright infringement claim related to the score and your composer didn't represent that the score was original to him – no insurance coverage. The list goes on. Innocent mistakes can cost you coverage. *Lesson:* When in doubt, ask your lawyer how to fill out the application, or even your broker.

Intentionally omitting information from the application

This is a variation on the above. Sometimes a producer will make a mistake, or sometimes he doesn't want to disclose something for fear of not getting coverage. Not a good idea. When in doubt, disclose. If you are denied coverage early, you can likely fix the situation. If you are denied coverage after a claim is filed, you are likely going to be SOL. *Lesson:* Be honest!



As partners at Los Angeles-based Donaldson + Califf, Lisa Califf and Christopher Perez help their clients apply for errors and omissions insurance on a daily basis. Here's their top seven "preventable pitfalls and mistakes" to watch for.

Not disclosing claims to the insurance company

Let's say you get a cease-and-desist letter from an attorney who claims you didn't secure permission from her client for the use of her name and likeness in the film. A cease-and-desist letter will always be something you need to report to your broker, who then must notify the insurance carrier. Usually the insurance company will allow your transactional attorney to make the first contact with opposing counsel to resolve the issue, but it's the insurance carrier's decision to determine which attorney handles any "claim" that comes in. If you don't disclose the claim, or if you disclose it too late, then the insurance company may decline coverage. *Lesson:* Read your insurance policy to find the definition for a "claim" that must be reported. Whenever a "claim" comes in, notify your broker immediately.

Thinking that E&O covers contract claims

Your E&O policy will cover claims related to copyright, trademark and personal rights, such as defamation, libel, slander, the rights of privacy and the right of publicity. It does not cover breach of contract claims. Let's say you entered an agreement with your director of photography to provide a credit in the main titles, but you decide not to credit him at all. If he sues for breach of contract, your E&O policy will not cover that claim. *Lesson:* Be aware that contract claims are not covered by E&O.

Accepting a higher deductible or lower limits than a distributor will accept

Insurance companies are sometimes hesitant to quote policies for films they think will attract claims and, consequently, defense costs. Some insurance companies may be willing to quote policies with a higher deductible for either (a) any claim related to the film or (b) a claim coming from a specific individual or rights holder. However, most distributors will require an E&O policy with a deductible of no greater than \$25,000. Sometimes you have no option but to accept a higher deductible from your E&O carrier, but you should expect a negotiation with your distributors if that's the case. *Lesson:* Try to keep the deductible at \$25,000 or lower if possible.



Not selecting a broker who is experienced in non-fiction programming

You need to enlist the services of a broker who has experience with non-fiction programming so that they understand the kinds of issues that might arise. While your broker doesn't need the expertise of a lawyer, your broker should still have a basic understanding of the law on copyright, trademark and personal rights. *Lesson:* Ask experienced non-fiction filmmakers who they use as a broker for their projects, or ask your clearance attorney who he or she recommends.

Lisa Califf and Christopher Perez are partners at Donaldson + Califf, a Los Angeles-based law firm representing independent producers of film, television and web-based content with an emphasis on all clearance matters.



Page

When and why is it necessary to obtain someone's "life rights" when embarking on a non-fiction project? Here, Reavis Parent Lehrer's Nicole Page shines some light on the subject.

Life Rights – It's Complicated

In order to obtain access to and cooperation from subjects as well as to avoid lawsuits alleging defamation, misappropriation of likeness, infliction of emotional distress or other claims, it is sometimes necessary to secure "life rights" agreements, particularly if the life of one particular subject is central to the film. While factual information isn't copyrightable, fiction and non-fiction filmmakers will likely need to contemplate at some point in their careers whether or not securing life rights is essential to a particular project. Life story rights agreements allow filmmakers to portray and editorialize an individual's life story. But as you'll see here, several factors determine whether such an agreement is necessary.

PUBLIC (OR SEMI-PUBLIC) VS. PRIVATE

A suit brought by the former manager of N.W.A., who maintained he was depicted without his consent in the film *Straight Outta Compton*, recently made headlines and confirms that securing life rights is not necessary if you are depicting a living subject – in a non-defamatory manner – who is considered a semi-public figure. Among the claims in the lawsuit against the producers and NBCUniversal, former N.W.A. manager Jerry Heller alleged that his name and likeness were misappropriated because he had not consented to the use of his name, likeness or story in the film. The Court dismissed Heller's claims on the grounds that "the role Plaintiff played in N.W.A.'s rise to stardom is certainly a matter of public interest. The First Amendment, therefore, insulates Defendants of any liability for misappropriation of likeness." Heller's life – as it related to the influential rap group's story – was both newsworthy and a matter of public interest, and therefore protected by the First Amendment. For that reason, it wasn't necessary to get his consent to depict him in the film.

When it comes to deciding whether or not you need life rights, how public or private your subject's life is or was is important. Because more information about the lives of public officials and figures (such as Heller, to the extent that he managed a well-known group of musicians) is available publicly, and therefore more exposed to scrutiny, filmmakers can feel more confident in depicting their life stories without fear of successful legal challenges on privacy grounds.

The flip side is the scenario where the person you are depicting is unknown and out of the public eye. In that case, your film is likely the vehicle that thrusts them into the public consciousness and if it is not done with that person's consent, that could form the basis for an invasion of privacy claim, among others.

DEAD OR ALIVE?

Whether or not the person whose story you'd like to use is alive or dead is also a significant factor in determining the need to secure life rights. The law does not recognize defamation or invasion of privacy claims of dead people. In other words, if you are dead, then under U.S. law, you cannot be defamed and your privacy cannot be infringed on. But that doesn't mean that the estate of the dead person – particularly if the dead person is a celebrity – might not bring some other type of claim if the producer does not bring the estate on board the project and obtain consent to depict the life of the deceased. In addition, there may be very specific reasons to secure an agreement with the estate, such as access to materials relating to the deceased. If the dead person was an artist or musician, for example, the estate may control the intellectual property rights in the deceased's works, in which case some type of agreement with the estate is unavoidable if you want to use those works in your film.

WHEN TO GET LIFE RIGHTS EVEN IF YOU DON'T LEGALLY NEED THEM

As explained above, it is not always necessary and sometimes not even possible to secure life rights in order to depict someone in a film. It is doubtful Jerry Heller would have given permission to be portrayed in *Straight Outta Compton* even if he had been asked. Fortunately for the producers, the fact that he was deemed to be a semi-public figure gave the filmmakers broad First Amendment protection against his claims. However, there are several benefits in securing life rights and the cooperation of the subjects of your films through life rights agreements. First, it may be very beneficial to have your subject actively participating in or promoting the film and providing access, material and information that is integral to the story.

Second, a good life rights agreement will include a very thorough release whereby your subject agrees that you may use her appearance and name and likeness in your film, and further agrees not to bring claims of defamation, invasion of privacy, etc., against you or any third-party distributors. That kind of release agreement may in fact be absolutely required for distribution and insurance purposes.

Third, these agreements, where necessary or optimal, can be an opportunity to create trust, open dialogue, and cultivate a spirit of cooperation and partnership between the filmmaker and the subject.

Nicole Page is a partner and head of media and entertainment law at Reavis Parent Lehrer LLP in New York.

Out of the Bronze Age

In the app-filled world of tablets and smartphones, interactive engagement with television is still a relative anomaly. Here, K7 Media's Phil Birchenall suggests ways to drag television into the 21st century.

When my four-year-old daughter wants to watch an episode of her latest 'find' on Netflix up on the big TV screen, she drags her tiny pink chair to the center of the wall below it, clammers up, and starts waving her arms to 'drag' the shows up and down until Dad finds what she's looking for. It's a scenario now commonplace in living rooms across the world. I, on the other hand, take an unnatural amount of pleasure in turning the home thermostat up and down from the same screen... just because I can.

In our own way, we've both come to expect different things from our TV than that quaint old vision of telly. And this puzzles me. You see, for all the 'golden age of drama' rhetoric, most of how we watch and interact with TV feels distinctly like we're staring at a Michelangelo carved on a cave wall: the television experience is still very much in the Bronze Age.

The biggest screen in the house is the one that we currently have the least depth of relationship with. Whereas our smartphones and tablets have become to feel like a natural extension of our senses, keeping us in touch with the world and our loved ones, the TV rarely engages us in anything than a one-way flow of content. It truly is an idiot box (it, not you, dear reader).

This has to change.

Where television has gotten a connection to the digital world, through the rising onslaught of SVODs on smart-ish TVs, the excitement of boundless choice is quickly tempered by the agony of finding something you'd actually choose to watch. Our thumb muscles have never been so well developed.

I don't want to get into the financial implications of the current war between the FCC and the U.S. cable operators. However, looking purely from a creative perspective; moving away from the status quo – where you're forced to rent a cable box from your cable provider – brings competition into just how you get TV into your living room. And with competition comes much-needed innovation.

The Apple TV 4 offers a glimpse of how a more open, app-based, ecosystem might evolve. The



Roku and Amazon Fire platforms are seeing increased take-up, and Samsung is deploying its Tizen operating software across its smart TV range – now pre-installed on over 20 million sets globally.

We're now seeing the beginning of an age where how we engage with our TVs, isn't constrained by technologies that have barely progressed in a period where Moore's Law has accelerated change in every other aspect of our digital lives.

But what could this power do for us in the TV world, and why should you care?

First and foremost, by unleashing a supercomputer in your set-top-box, those creating user interfaces for the aforementioned SVODs can create truly intuitive ways of navigating those acres and acres of shows.

In a recent series of blogs called *The Future of Television*, Lee Simpson, a product designer at Sky Kids development studio ustwo, proposes some fascinating ways of serving content to audiences

that are possible in this app-based paradigm. Imagine Netflix suggesting what shows to watch based upon discussions you've had on Facebook. Scary? Yes. Super useful? Hell, yes.

Since Apple TV 4 launched, some of the TV apps that have captured people's imagination aren't necessarily native SVODs or the casual gaming titles; the really interesting examples layer a unique digital experience over traditional TV content, and I think this should offer inspiration for those looking to do "something different."

QVC might not be your channel of choice, but with its clever tvOS app audiences can browse, access product information, and order high quality wares they don't need with just a tap of their remote. Meanwhile, the official March Madness TV app gives basketball fans a chance to binge on live games; watching two games side-by-side on the screen. Each blurs the line between what we previously understood to be either an app or a TV show.

Some of the best fun I've had with my Apple TV has been spent with my family competing on quiz apps. It's a natural fit for the living room.

So imagine delivering a big game show through a standalone TV app – rather than as a traditional broadcast – where interactivity is baked in? With no need to connect another device, viewers could dive in and play along with what's happening on

their big screen instantly through their remote. Why not think about how a show's interactive elements can be made core to the experience, rather than just added as a 'bolt on'?

As we found with smartphones, when creative people are given clever technologies, the ingenuity of the results grows exponentially. The big monolithic box in our living room is on the cusp of a similar shift: let's harness that, challenge our thinking, and drag the TV experience out of prehistoric times.

Phil Birchenall is projects manager at Manchester-based consultancy K7 Media. •

The biggest screen in the house is currently the one we have the least depth of relationship with.



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Steve Harvey (left)
chats with a talented
tyke.

LITTLE BIG SHOTS GOES GLOBAL

Following MIPTV, America's latest unscripted sensation is picking up deals worldwide.

During the Cannes television conference, news came that *Little Big Shots*, the kids talent format hosted by Steve Harvey and airing on NBC in the U.S., will have local versions in the UK via ITV and Spain via Mediaset. Since then, seven more local production deals have been inked.

In Germany, ProSiebenSat.1 has picked up rights to the format, with Warner Bros. International Television Production (WBITVP) Germany slated to produce. Other European territories taking the format include Greece, with Star TV commissioning 12 episodes, and Belgium, with VTM commissioning six episodes to be produced by WBITVP Belgium.

Meanwhile, in Southeast Asia, TV3 in Thailand and ABS-CBN in the Philippines have signed on for what WBITVP calls "significant episode-count deals" for the series, to air in primetime in each territory.

Rounding out the international action for the feel-good format are deals in the Middle East, with MBC set to produce 13 episodes of the show as well as a second season, and Latin America, with RCN in Colombia commissioning 13 episodes.

WBITVP says Australia and Italy are also showing interest in the format.

The U.S. version of *Little Big Shots* is produced by Warner Horizon Television, East 112th Street Productions and A Very Good Production. Its time period premiere on March 13 was the most-watched regular time period debut of any new show of any kind – scripted or unscripted – on any network for the 2015-16 season, and it was the most-watched regularly scheduled Sunday entertainment program on NBC, excluding sports telecasts, since 2005.

Barry Walsh

Netflix goes big with *Beastmaster*

Netflix is moving into the unscripted competition space in a major way.

The global SVOD network is launching *Ultimate Beastmaster*, a global athletic competition series exec produced by Sylvester Stallone and 25/7 Productions' Dave Broome and set to debut as 10-episode orders in six territories, each with their own local versions.

The launch territories include the U.S., Brazil, South Korea, Mexico, Germany and Japan. All 10 episodes of the series will be made available at the same moment in each international territory via Netflix.

Each hour-long episode will feature 12 competitors, two from each country, squaring off against each other to face 'The Beast,' a physically demanding obstacle course. In the final episode of the season, the nine winners from earlier episodes will compete against each other to decide the victor.

For each version, local celebrity hosts and athletes will take part in the series to provide commentary. In the U.S., Terry Crews and Charissa Thompson will host.

In a statement, Stallone said: "The invitation to partner with Netflix and mega-producer Dave Broome on this revolutionary concept was an opportunity I couldn't resist." Broome added: "[Netflix's] trailblazing network is the perfect home for this ground-breaking global series."

"As a global Internet TV network, Netflix can uniquely create a compelling event that pits great competitors from six countries against one another, with commentators that audiences from these countries love and then unleash all of the episodes, at once, in multiple languages for our members to enjoy no matter where they are," offered Erik Barmack, Netflix vice president, International Originals.

A launch date for the series has not yet been announced.

The news comes as other new platforms are entering the unscripted competition arena, such as Verizon's go90, which will soon be launching *The Runner*, via Pilgrim Media Group, Adaptive Studios and Pearl Street Pictures. **BW •**

Burt and The Bandit

BY MANORI RAVINDRAN

In a career spanning almost 60 years, actor Burt Reynolds hasn't had many opportunities to set the record straight about his professional choices – particularly that 1972 pose on a bearskin rug for *Cosmopolitan*. But in CMT's original documentary *The Bandit*, the 80-year-old star of *Deliverance* (1972) and *Boogie Nights* (1997) sounds off about that centerfold, its place in the cultural context of the 1970s and a long-lasting friendship.

Directed by *The Overnighters* helmer Jesse Moss, who fondly calls *The Bandit* a "buddy documentary," the film details the making of the 1977 romp *Smokey and the Bandit*, an unlikely box office hit starring Reynolds that earned an Academy Award nomination and effectively cemented the actor's status as Hollywood's good old boy. The film, which bowed at SXSW in March, also details the close bond between Reynolds and his *Bandit* director Hal Needham (right), one of the most iconic stuntmen in the business.

Reynolds, who released a memoir last fall and has a number of acting projects on the go, caught up with *realscreen* around *The Bandit*'s Austin premiere.

What were your initial thoughts about being involved in the documentary?

I turned it down and then thought about it and decided I would do it. I thought if we had the right people, it would work. Initially, I didn't know the people involved [but] I came around because I talked to some people that had worked with them and it was all very positive. They were kind of a class act.

How did you feel about revisiting *Smokey and the Bandit*, and commenting on certain aspects of your career during this time?

Surprisingly enough for me, I enjoyed it. I didn't think I would, but I did enjoy it. So many things were written that weren't true, and I thought if I had some control over it, it would be better for me, and it was.

Was it difficult to revisit the *Cosmopolitan* cover, among other things?

I wished I hadn't done [the centerfold], first of all. But I did it and I thought everybody would see the humor in it, but everybody didn't see the humor of it. I had a good time with it, eventually, once people realized that I was doing it with a smile on my face.

What was it like to discuss your friendship with Hal?

I enjoyed it enormously. I thought he was one of the most interesting men in terms of what he had done and in terms of the stunt world, and to ask any stunt man about him, most will say he was the best there ever was. He did things where they would ask somebody to do it and they'd all turn them down, and they'd say 'Call Hal' and Hal would do it. He was a tremendous athlete.

Jesse Moss has mentioned that you presented a lot of your personal archives for the doc.

I had no problem with that. I trusted [him]. I wasn't worried about letting him have access to whatever I had.

How do you think a film like *Smokey* stands up today?

It somehow holds up. I don't know how or why, but it does. It's just the right time for a film like that, I think. A film that doesn't really have a particular plot but you enjoy yourself. If you let yourself enjoy it, you will. •

By: EARL B. HEARD
Founder and CEO
BIC Alliance



The making of 'Rock Bottom and Back'

BIC Media Solutions

Rock Bottom and Back—From Desperation to Inspiration” is a collaborative effort by many folks who are as devoted as I am to inspiring others through books, magazines and films.

Throughout my life, I have experienced the most joy and personal fulfillment when I have helped other people. Along the way, I have learned that when people feel alone, abandoned and afraid, they are more vulnerable to making poor choices. Knowing that someone cares, help is available and others share their experiences can make a real difference to someone who is hitting rock bottom. That knowledge led to the idea of creating “Rock Bottom and Back.” However, I knew I would need partners who shared my vision. Each person involved in this project dedicated tremendous effort toward helping me create something that has the potential to change many lives for the better.

For the writing of the book, I enlisted the help of Susan Mustafa, a New York Times bestselling author whom I met 15 years ago when she worked with me at BIC Alliance as an editor. I knew she would be the perfect partner on this project. She has a unique ability to help people express their pains as well as their triumphs, and this book reflects her talent for telling stories honestly and empathetically.

Rose Gladner, BIC Alliance’s media manager, has also been an invaluable asset to this project. She helped orchestrate the development of both the book and its companion DVD by helping me choose people whose stories would be the most powerful. She coordinated with everyone involved to ensure we produced something that would be meaningful and impactful.

Tracy and Daniel Balsz,



From left, Devin Black and James Hulse of The New Orleans Mission; Stanley Roberts, former NBA star; and Steven Scalfidi of The New Orleans Mission visit during a filming session of “Rock Bottom and Back.”

co-founders of YASNY Entertainment in Los Angeles, soon became our West Coast media partners. YASNY Entertainment is developing a pilot pitch and sizzle reel to introduce and sell the “Rock Bottom and Back” television series to television networks. Recently, YASNY completed production on the celebrity talent segment of the sizzle reel and DVD, which features actor Danny Trejo as the narrator. YASNY is also creating our website to ensure this book and film reach the widest audience possible.

While this project was still underway, we also partnered with David Bottner and Steven Scalfidi at The New Orleans Mission to help produce our DVD and film interviews with some of the people featured in the book. The New Orleans Mission is a homeless shelter that offers its guests the opportunity to attain job skills, including media production. Already, “Rock Bottom and Back” is helping homeless people learn new skills that will enable them to become self-sufficient.

For more information about “Rock Bottom and Back,” visit www.rockbottomandback.com or call (800) 460-4242. ●

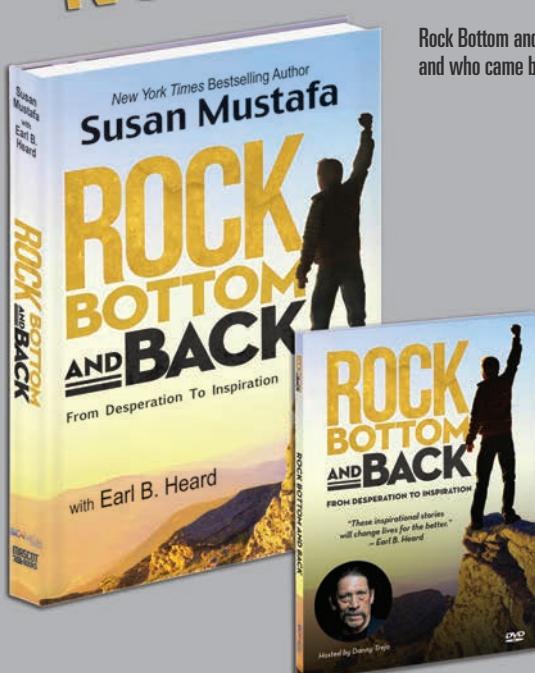


From left, YASNY Entertainment’s Daniel Balsz, Hollywood film actor Danny Trejo, Digital Spatula’s Steve Taylor and YASNY Entertainment’s Tracy Balsz spend time together on the set of “Rock Bottom and Back.”



For the writing of “Rock Bottom and Back,” BIC Alliance’s Earl Heard, right, brought on Susan Mustafa, a New York Times bestselling author.

ORDER NOW!



Rock Bottom and Back—From Desperation to Inspiration

BIC Media Solutions, a division of BIC Alliance, is proud to announce its latest project, Rock Bottom and Back—From Desperation to Inspiration, is now available for purchase.

Rock Bottom and Back is a collection of inspirational stories about people from all walks of life who have hit rock bottom in their personal lives and who came back to give back by helping others in extraordinary ways. There will not only be a book but also a promotional DVD.

“‘Rock Bottom and Back’ is a superbly written compilation that brings the reader face-to-face with nearly every form of addiction, destructive lifestyle, and bad decision that drags people down into the pit of despair. But that isn’t where the stories stop. We get to read how, through God’s grace, lives are restored and ultimately blessed. Everyone can relate to this book and glean inspiration from it.”

—Mike Chaffin, Bible Ministry chairman and member of the board of directors of the Oilfield Christian Fellowship, and operations manager for Valence Operating Company

“‘Rock Bottom and Back’ should be a game changer for those fighting addictions that destroy their lives and the lives of their family members. There were times when I literally found it impossible to stop reading. This is one of those timeless books that will inspire people for decades to come. Readers will want to share ‘Rock Bottom and Back’ with anyone they know who may be struggling through life.”

—David M. Starkey, director, Empire Scaffold

BIC Media’s books are perfect for corporate gifts, fundraisers and community outreach programs. This inspirational collection and companion DVD are available by the case, if desired. To order individual copies, visit www.rockbottomandback.com. We can also help you create your custom book or film. For information, please contact Rose Gladner at 800-460-4242 or rose@bicalliance.com.

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